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STANDISH OF STANDISH

By JANE GOODWIN AUSTIN

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME II





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"Pardon me, Mistress Molines"

STANDISH OF STANDISH
A STORY OF THE PILGRIMS BY
JANE GOODWIN AUSTIN

WITH PHOTOGRAVURE ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM DESIGNS BY FRANK T MERRILL
IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME II



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Wortense Weed Taylor
by
Dean Ralph W. Taylor
C.R. A. 1911

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STANDISH OF STANDISH.

CHAPTER XX.

FUNERAL—BAKED MEATS AND MARRIAGE FEASTS.

“METHINKS our governor should not be buried with as little ceremony as we perforce have showed our meanest servant,” said Captain Standish gloomily to Elder Brewster the evening of Carver’s death. “You Separatists despise the ministering of the Church, but what have ye set in its place?”

“We clothe not the coffins of the dead with the filthy rags of Popery, and we pray not for the souls of them whom God hath taken into His own hand, for that were of the sins of presumption against which David doth specially pray, but yet,” — and the Elder’s face softened, “I am of your mind, Captain, that we should honor our chief magistrate in the last service we can render him, and although by his own wish I ceased to pray for him ere the last breath was sped, and will never again pray for him or any parted soul, I well approve of such military honors as we are able to pay to his memory, and I will carry my musket with the rest, and fire it as you shall direct.”

“Why, that’s more than ever I would have looked for, Elder,” exclaimed Standish in amaze. “But since you so proffer, I gladly accept your aid and countenance, and by your leave, since as yet we have no governor in place of him who is gone, I will order the funeral by mine own ideas.”

“As a military man?”

“Surely. I claim no spiritual powers,” and with a curious expression of content and disapproval upon his face the captain went away to so arrange and order his plan, that at sunrise on the third day a guard of twelve men, including the elder, presented themselves at the house of mourning, and receiving the coffin upon the crossed barrels of their muskets carried it along the brow of the hill to the grave newly opened amid the springing wheat.

Mistress Carver had made but one request, and that of piteous earnestness,—

“See that they make his grave where another may be dug close beside,” pleaded she, and John Howland had seen that it was as she desired.

Earth to earth was reverently and silently laid, the grave was covered in, and then, at the captain’s signal, the twelve muskets were fired in relays of four, and their mournful echo mingled with the sobbing dirge of the waves breaking upon the Pilgrim Rock, while the dense column of smoke rising grandly to heaven was the only monument then or ever erected to John Carver, that willing martyr and gallant gentleman who had indeed “given his life for the brethren.”

Returning to the Common house the Guard of Honor joined with the rest of the townsmen in a Council, whereat they elected William Bradford to be their second Governor, and as he now lay ill in his bed, Isaac Allerton was chosen to be his Assistant and mouth-piece.

Bradford, neither over elated nor daunted by his new dignities, accepted the nomination, and with few and brief intervals retained it until his own death some

four-and-thirty years later, and nobly and faithfully did he perform its duties.

About a week after Carver's funeral the new governor, now convalescent, received a visit from Edward Winslow, who sought him with the formal request that he as chief magistrate of the colony would perform the marriage ceremony between him and Susanna, widow of William White.

For the Separatists during their sojourn in Holland had accepted the creed of that nation of traders, and held with them that marriage is merely a civil contract, requiring a magistrate to secure the proper amount of goods to each party, and make sure that neither defrauded the other. As for the sacramental blessing of the Church, said the Dutchman and the Separatist, it costs money and bestows none, and priests are ever dangerous associates, so we'll none of them or their craft.

Apart from this view of the matter however, the civil authority was the only one available in this case, since Pastor Robinson had been detained in Leyden with the rest of his flock, and Elder Brewster had no authority except to preach.

"It will be my first essay at such an office, Winslow, and I know not precisely how to go about it," replied Bradford smilingly when his friend had somewhat formally declared his errand.

"But you were yourself wed that way," replied the bridegroom impatiently. "For me, my first wife held to her early teaching in that particular, and would be married in a church and by a minister."

"Yes, I was wed by a magistrate in Amsterdam," replied Bradford reluctantly; "but the old Dutchman

did so mumble and mouth his words that I gathered not the sense of half. Likely it is, however, Master Carver hath left some Manual for such occasion. He was warned or ever he left England that he was like to be our Governor for longer than the voyage."

"Doubtless, then, he had some such office-book. Shall I bid John Howland search for it?" asked Winslow.

"Nay, the widow hath already sent me a box of papers and some little books, which she said should be the governor's. I have not yet searched them, but I will do so before I sleep. What day have you set for your wedding, Winslow?"

"Why, we would not seem to fail in respect to our dear departed brother, and would leave a clear fortnight between his funeral and our wedding; so an' it please you we will set the marriage for Thursday of next week."

"And at what hour?"

"At even when all may rest from their labor it seemeth best. After supper we will be ready."

"Wilt come to me or I to thee?"

"The dame saith she would fain be wed in her new home. It is just finished to-day, and such gear as we have will be carried thither to-morrow."

"I mind me that Mistress White hath a fair cradle of her own," suggested Bradford dryly.

"Ay. Peregrine lieth in it now."

"May it never stand idle. I will come to thy new house then on Thursday of next week, after supper."

As Winslow departed, Desire Minter met him on the threshold, and with a hasty reverence asked,—

"Is the governor within, and can I see him?"

“Ay, lass, he is within, and I know not why thou shouldst not see him. Knock and enter.”

And Bradford still languid from his late illness raised his head from the back of his chair with a patient smile as the knock was immediately followed by Desire’s broad and comely face.

“Can your worship grant me a few moments if it please your honor ?”

“Nay, Desire, it needs not so much ceremony to speak to William Bradford. What wouldest thou ?”

“Well, worshipful sir, ’tis a little advice. Your honor sees that I am a poor lonely lass, bereft now of even my cousin Carver’s husband”—

“Nay, my girl, our late governor was more than ‘even my cousin’s husband.’ Pay honor to him rather than to me.”

“Ay, but he is dead and cannot help me, and thou art alive.”

“And better a live dog than a dead lion,” murmured Bradford looking sorrowfully at the girl whose selfish cunning was not keen enough to disguise itself. “Well ?”

“Why, I fain would know your honor’s judgment upon my marriage.”

“Thou marry ! And who is the man ?”

“Why, there now is the question, sir ? Captain Stan-dish hath showed me that he fain would ask me to wife, did not Priscilla Molines woo him so desperately”—

“Peace, child ! How dare one Christian woman speak thus of another !”

“But ’t is so, your worship ; ’t is so, indeed, and how can I gainsay it ?” whimpered the girl. “She as good as asked him when we were sick together in the hospi-

tal, and she wrought upon her father to ask him, and what could he do between them, and still he would rather have had me to wife, and I would have not said him nay."

"Well, and what can I do about it?"

"Bid Priscilla give him up, your honor, and bid him speak out to me, and quickly, for else John Howland will have me to wife."

"Ah, and hath Howland also asked thee?"

"Yes, your honor, he asked me as the *Mayflower* was sailing out of the harbor, and I told my cousin Carver, and she says it will be an ease to her mind to leave me with so good a man to my husband, but for me I had rather have the Captain."

"And thou callest upon me to straighten this coil, and marry thee to whichever man will have thee, eh?"

"Yes, your honor."

"Thou'rt a simple lass, and knowst not half thou sayest. Go now, and I will send for thee in a day or two. But see thou keep a quiet tongue. Say not one word so much as to the rushes, or thou shalt have no husband at all. Mind that!"

"Oh, I'll not speak, I'll not forget, trust me to do all your honor's bidding," cried the girl joyfully, and Bradford gazing at her in compassionate wonder rejoined,—

"Well, go now, and remember. Stay, send me one of the lads, no matter which. The first one thou seest."

And when Giles Hopkins presently appeared he sent him to crave the presence of Captain Standish when he should have finished his noon-meat. The Captain came at once, and after a few friendly words the governor calmly inquired,—

"Dost wish to wed with Desire Minter, Myles?"

“Desire Minter! Has thy fever come back and turned thy brain, Bradford?”

“Nay, but wilt thou wed with her?”

“Not if there was no other woman upon earth. Dost catch my meaning, Will?”

“Ay, I fear me that I do.”

“Fearest! Why, dost thou desire so monstrous a sacrifice to the common weal, as Winslow words it? If the wench must be wed there are men enow who are not of thy nearest friends, Bradford. And, besides, thou knowest I am to marry Priscilla Molines, and now I think on 't, 't is time to arrange it. I did but wait for the brig to be gone, but then the governor's death put all thought of marriage gear out of my head.”

“Oh ay, I mind me now that thou didst speak of Priscilla. Hast ever spoken to her?”

“Not I. I have no skill in such matters, nor time, nor thought. I'll write her a cartel, I mean a letter of proposals”—

“But can she read? Not many of our women are so deeply learned.”

“I know not, I hope not. The only woman I ever cared to speak to of love could do no more than sign her name and 't was enough.”

“Well, then, settle it thine own way, only let it be soon, for I fain would see thee with a home and children about thy hearth, old friend.”

“Ay, I suppose 't is a duty, — a man who hath given all beside, may well give his own way into the bargain. I'll marry before your new old love can reach here, Governor.”

“Nay, when thou sayest ‘Governor,’ I note that thou art ill pleased with somewhat, Myles. Is it with me?”

“Nay, Will, ‘t is with thy words.”

And laughing in his own grim way the Captain left the house, and strode up the hill to solace his spirit by examining and petting his big guns.

That same evening Bradford walked painfully across the little space dividing Hopkins’s house from that where Katharine Carver sat alone beside the little fire still comfortable to an invalid, and after some conversation said, —

“Dame, hast any plan for marrying thy kinswoman Desire Minter to any of our young fellows?”

“I am glad you have spoken of it, Governor Bradford,” replied the widow eagerly. “For it is a matter largely in my thoughts. I do not think I am to tarry very long behind my dear lord,—nay, do not speak of that I beseech you, kind sir,—but it hath dwelt painfully on my mind that the poor silly maid would be left alone, and none so ill-fitted to care for herself have I ever seen. But she tells me that John Howland hath spoken to her, and she is not ill inclined to him. Would not it be approved of your judgment, Governor?”

“Ay, if in truth both parties desire it, dame. Suppose we have Howland in before us now, and ask him his will? Thou canst deal with the maid after.”

“He is just without, cleaving some fuel for this fire, if your excellency will please to call him.”

“I will, but first, Dame, let me beg thee, of our old friendship, of the love I bore thy husband and he to me, treat me not with such cruel formality. True it is that his honors have fallen upon me, and that his place knoweth him no more; and yet it is his spirit, his counsel, and his ensample that rules my poor actions at every turn. Be not jealous, be not resentful, mistress, though well I

wot so loving and so faithful a heart as thine cannot well escape such weakness, for 't is part of woman's nature. But canst not be a little mindful of thine old friend's feelings too, and soften somewhat of this stately ceremony in speaking to him ? ”

“ Yes, he loved thee, he loved thee well, and he would have chidden me ” —

“ Nay, nay, weep not, Dame Katharine. I did not mean to grieve thee but only to tell how I was grieved ; but then, we men are still too clumsy to meddle with women's tender natures. Be what thou wilt, speak as thou wilt to me dear Dame, I am and ever shall be thy faithful friend and servant.”

He went out as he spoke, and when a few moments later Howland and he returned together the lady had resumed her usual quietude of manner.

“ Sit thee down, John. Mistress Carver and I have somewhat to ask of thee. Art thou minded to wed ? ”

“ Not while my mistress needeth my service.”

“ Mayhap 't will further her comfort, John.”

“ Is it thy wish, Dame ? ” and the young man turned so eager a face toward her, and spoke so brightly, that a smile stirred the widow's pale lips as she replied, —

“ 'T is plain enough that 't is thy wish, John, and it will wonderfully content my conscience in the matter of bringing Desire Minter away from the home she had, poor though it then seemed.”

“ Desire Minter ! ” echoed Howland.

“ Why yes, she told me how you spoke to her the day the Mayflower sailed, and she modestly avows that she is well content to be thy wife.”

“ But ” —

“ What is it, Howland ? Speak out, man,” interposed Bradford with authority. “ Thou seemest dazed.”

“ Why, truth to tell, sir, and my dear Dame, I thought not of Desire as my wife ” —

“ Didst thou not speak to her of marriage ? ”

“ Surely not, — or — there was some idle jest between us, I mind not what, and I never thought on’t again.”

“ But she did, thou seest,” said the Governor sternly. “ Thou knowest how ‘idle jesting that is not convenient’ is condemned in Holy Writ, and now is the saying proven. The maid believed thee in earnest, and hath set her mind upon thee ” —

But of a sudden Bradford remembering Desire’s plainly expressed preference for the Captain, if he might be had, paused abruptly, and Dame Carver took up the word, —

“ It would much comfort my mind, John, if thou wouldst consent to this thing. The maiden’s future is a fardel upon my shoulders now, and they are not over strong. ’T is a good wench, John, if not over brilliant.”

“ Say no more, dame, say no more. If it will be a pleasure and a comfort to thee, it is enough.”

“ But hast thou any other choice, John ? Wouldst thou have chosen Priscilla, like thy friend Alden ? ”

“ Nay, Dame.”

“ But thou hast something in thy mind, good John. Tell it out, I pray thee.”

“ Well, then, to speak all my mind, Mistress, there is no maid among us so fair in my eyes, and so sweet, and pure, and true, as Elizabeth Tilley, and I had ” —

“ Why, she is scarce turned sixteen, dear boy,” exclaimed the widow.

“ I had thought to wait a year or two for her,” faltered Howland, but Bradford interposed, —

“ Nay, nay, John, we cannot have our sturdy men

waiting for little maids to grow up. There are boys enow coming on for them, and as for thee, why man, thou 'rt five-and-twenty, art not?"

"Seven-and-twenty, sir. But all this is beside the matter. If my dear mistress asks me to marry Desire Minter as a comfort to her, I will do it to-day."

"I thank thee heartily, John." And in the affectionate glance and smile his lily-like dame turned upon him Howland felt more than repaid for his sacrifice.

"And yet," continued she, "I will not let thee marry to-day, nor for a year. But if thou wilt call thyself betrothed to her, and promise me on thy faith to deal truly by her, and at the year's end marry her if you both are still so minded, I will be content. I shall leave her in thy care, even as he who is gone left me in thy care, and a good and faithful guardian hast thou been, dear friend."

"I pledged my life to him that I would do my best, and now I pledge it in your hands, my honored mistress and dear lady, that I will so deal with this maid as shall most pleasure you."

And so John Howland and Desire Minter were formally betrothed; and before the month of May was gone the wheat upon the hill-side was again disturbed as John Carver's wife came to lay herself down to rest close beside him in sweet content.

"They tell of broken hearts," said Surgeon Fuller musing above that double grave; "and were I asked to name Dame Katharine's complaint I know no name for it but that."

CHAPTER XXI.

AN AFFAIR OF HONOR.

“ THOU liest foully, Edward Dotey ! Thou liest even as Ananias and Sapphira lied.”

“ Liest, thou son of Belial ! ’T is thou that liest, and art a cock-a-hoop braggart into the bargain, Master Edward Lister ! Tell me that our master’s daughter gave thee that kerchief ” —

“ If thou couldst read, I ’d show thee ‘ Constance Hopkins ’ fairly wrought upon it by the young mistress’s own hand.”

“ Then thou stolest it, and I will straight to our master and tell him on ’t ! ”

“ Hi, hi, my springalds ! what meaneth all this vapor-ing and noise ? What ’s amiss, Lister ? ”

“ It matters not what ’s amiss John Billington. Pass on and attend to thine own affairs.”

“ Lister ’s afraid to tell that he carrieth stolen goods in his doublet and lies about them into the bargain,” sneered Edward Dotey.

“ I lie do I, thou base-born coward ! Lie thou there, then ! ”

And Edward Lister with one generous buffet stretched his opponent upon the pile of firewood they had been hewing a little way from the town.

Billington who had wandered in that direction with his gun upon his shoulder looking for game, helped the

fallen man to his feet and officiously fingered a bruise rising upon his cheek.

“Hi! Hi! But here’s a coil! He’s wounded thee sorely, Dotey! I’m witness that he assaulted thee, with intent to kill like enough. Canst stand?”

“Let me go, let me at him, leave go of my arm John Billington! I’ll soon show thee”—

“Nay Ned,” interposed Lister, as Billington with a malignant grin upon his face half hindered, half permitted Dotey’s struggles to free himself from the poacher’s sinewy arms. “Nay, man, I meant not to draw e’en so much blood as trickles down thy cheek”—

“He meant to draw it by the bucketful and not in drops,” interpreted Billington. “And now he tries to crawl off. Take thy knife to him, man; nay, get ye both your swords and hack away at each other until we see which is the better bird. ’T is long since I saw a main”—

“Ay, we’ll fight it out, Lister, and see which is the better man in the matter you wot of.” And Dotey, who was furiously jealous lest his fellow retainer should have made more progress in the regard of Constance Hopkins than himself, nodded meaningly toward him, while Billington watched both with Mephistophilean glee.

“Agreed,” replied Lister more coolly. “Although thou knowest private quarrels are forbidden by the Captain.”

“Hah! Thou’rt afraid of our peppery little Captain!” cried Billington. “Some day thou’lt see me take him between thumb and finger and crack him like a flea if he mell’s too much with me.”

“I heard thee flout at his command t’ other day, and I heard him tell thee the next time thou didst so let

loose thy tongue, he 'd take order with thee," exclaimed Lister hotly, and Billington snapping his fingers contemptuously retorted, —

" 'T is no use, Dotey. Lister 's afraid of thee and will not fight. 'T is a good boy, but not over-brave."

" Stay you here, you two, till I can go and come, and we will see who is the coward ! " retorted Lister furiously, and before either could reply he sped away in the direction of the village.

" 'T is like a bull-fight," cried Billington with a coarse laugh. " The creature is hard to wake, but when he hath darts enough quivering in his hide he rouses up and showeth rare sport. Now let us find a fair, smooth field for our sword play. 'T is not so easy in this wild land."

" I know not why our captain should forbid the duello ; 't is ever the way of gentles to settle their disputes at the point of the sword," said Dotey musingly.

" Ay, and in this place we all are gentles, or all simples, I know not which," added Billington. " Certes, one man should here count as good as another, and 't is often in my mind to say so, and to cry, Down with governors, and captains, and elders " —

" Nay, nay, such talk smacks too strong of treason to suit my ear," exclaimed Dotey, who was, after all, an honest, well-meaning young fellow, a little carried away just now by jealousy and by the intoxicating air of liberty and freedom, but by no means to the extent of joining or desiring a revolt against the appointed powers of Church or State.

" Well, here is Lister, and with not only swords but daggers if I can see aright. Ay, that 's a good lad, that 's a brave lad, Lister ! There 's no craven in thy

"Let me go. let me at him!"



skin, is there, and I shrewdly nip mine own tongue for so calling thee. Come now, my merry men, let me place you fairly, each with his shoulder to the sun, each planted firmly on sound footing. There then, that is as well as may be, and well enow. Come, one, two, three, and lay on ! ”

But careful as Lister had been in securing and bringing away his weapons, he had not escaped the scrutiny of two bright eyes hidden behind the curtain dividing the nook where Constance Hopkins and her sister Damaris slept, from the main room of the dwelling, and no sooner had the young man left the house than Constance hastily followed, and running lightly up the hill to where the Captain with John Alden at his side was roofing in an addition to his half-built house she cried,—

“ Captain Standish, I fear me there’s mischief afoot with Edward Dotey and Edward Lister ! ”

“ Ay ? And what makes thee think so, my lass ? ” asked Standish peering down from his coign of vantage. “ Where are they ? ”

“ My father sent them afield this morning to rive and pile firewood, but a few minutes agone Edward Lister came creeping into the house and up to the loft where they two and Bartholomew sleep, and I who was below heard the clank of steel, and peeping saw that he brought down two swords and had stuck two daggers in his belt ” —

“ Aha ! Swords and daggers, my young masters ! ” exclaimed the Captain, hastily descending the ladder beside which Constance stood. “ John, drop thy hammer and take thy piece ; nay, take a good stick in hand, and we will soon bring these springalds to order. Whereaway are they, girl ? ”

“That-a-way, sir ; nay, see you not Lister’s cap bob up and down as he runneth behind yon bushes ?”

“Ay, lass, thou hast a sharp eye. Go home and rest content — thou ’rt a wise and good child.”

Ten minutes later the captain and his follower plunging through the underwood fringing Watson’s Hill heard the clash of steel upon steel and a coarse voice crying,—

“Well played, Dotey ! Nay, ’tis naught but a scratch — don’t give over for that, Lister ; up and at him again, boy ! Get thy revenge on him !”

“That knave Billington !” growled Standish : “I could have sworn he was in it ! Here you ! Stop that ! Drop your blades, men ! Drop them !”

Lister and Dotey, nothing loth, for both were wounded, obeyed the summons, and staggering back from each other stood leaning upon their swords and panting desperately, while Billington dexterously stepping backward behind an elder bush made his way forest-ward with a stealthy footstep, and a shrewd use of cover, suggestive of his former calling.

“And now what meaneth this, ye young fools !” sternly demanded Standish. “Are ye aping the sins of your betters and claiming the rights of the duello ? Rights say I ! Nay, ’tis forbidden to any man in this colony, and ye know it well, ha ?”

“Yea, Captain, we knew ’t was forbidden, but we had a quarrel”—

“And why if ye must fight did ye take to deadly weapons ? Have ye not a pair of fists apiece, or if that could not content ye, are there not single-sticks enow in these woods ? I ’ve a mind to take my ramrod in hand and show ye the virtue of a good stick, but I promise you that if not I, some other shall give you a lesson you ’ll not forget. Come, march !”

"I 'm shrewdly slashed in the leg, Captain," expostulated Dotey; "and fear me I cannot walk."

"Ay? Sit down, then, and let me see. Thou 'st a sore wound in thy leather breeches, but — ay, there 's a scratch beneath, but naught to hinder your moving. Here, I 'll plaster it up in a twinkling."

And from the pocket of his doublet the old soldier produced a case containing some of the most essential requisites of surgery, and with a deftness and delicacy of touch, surprising to one who had not seen him beside a sick-bed, he soon had the wound safe and comfortable.

"There, man, thou 'rt fit to walk from here to Cape Cod. Many a mile have I marched with a worse wound than that, and no better than a rag or at best my belt bound round it. Now you sirrah! Hast a scratch, too?"

For reply Lister silently held out a hand whence the blood dripped freely from a cut across the palm.

"Tried to grasp 't other fool's dagger in thy naked hand, eh?" coolly remarked the Captain as he cut a strip of plaster to fit the wound. "Now the next time take my counsel and catch it in the leathern sleeve of thy jerkin. Better wound a dead calf than a live one."

"Next time, sayst he!" commented Dotey in a mock aside to his companion. "So we were not so far astray this time."

"Next time thou meetest a dagger, I should have said," retorted the Captain with his grimmest smile. "I never said ye were not to fight, for I trow ye 'll have chance enough at that before I 'm done with ye; but when a handful of men are set as we are to garrison a little post on the frontier of a savage country, for one to fall afoul of another and to risk two lives out of a dozen for some senseless feud of their own is to my mind

little short of treason to the government they 've sworn to defend. Now then, march ! Alden, give Dotey thy arm to lean upon if he needs it. Forward ! ”

That night Dotey and Lister slept in two rooms under guard, and the next morning the freemen of the colony were convened in the Common house to judge their case. With them Billington was also summoned, although neither Dotey nor Lister had betrayed his complicity.

Accused of deliberate assault upon each other with deadly weapons both men humbly pleaded guilty and expressed their penitence, but to this Bradford gravely replied, —

“ Glad are we to know that ye are penitent, and resolved upon amendment, but ne'er the less we cannot therefore omit some signal punishment both to make a serious impression upon your own memories, and to advertise to all other evil-doers that we bear not the sword of justice in vain. Brethren, I pray you speak your minds. What ought to be done to these would-be murderers ? ”

“ In the army they would have earned a flogging,” remarked the captain sitting at the governor's right hand.

“ Perhaps solitary confinement with fasting would subdue the angry heat of their blood most effectually,” said the elder at Bradford's other side.

“ Had we a pillory or a pair of stocks I would advise that public disgrace,” said Winslow ; and Allerton suggested, —

“ They might be fined for the benefit of the public purse.”

“ If the Governor will leave them to me I 'll promise to trounce them well, and after, to set them extra tasks

for a month or so," offered Hopkins; and Alden murmured to Howland,—

"Allerton is treasurer of the public purse, and Hopkins will profit by the extra labor, mark you!"

"What is thy counsel, Surgeon Fuller?" inquired Bradford, and the whimsical doctor replied,—

"I once saw two fellows in a little village of Sussex lying upon the stones of the market-place, tied neck and heels, and methinks I never have heard such ingenious profanity as those men were yelling each at his unseen comrade. I asked the publican where I baited my horse the cause of so strange a spectacle, and he said this was their manner of disciplining brawlers in the ale-house. They were to lie there four-and-twenty hours without bite or sup, and so I left them. Methinks it were a suitable discipline in this case, but I may fairly hope the profanity of those unenlightened rustics will give place with our erring brethren to sighs of penitence and sorrow."

"What think you, brethren, of our good surgeon's suggestion?" asked Bradford, restraining the smile tempting the corners of his mouth. "It approves itself to me as a fair sentence. Will those who are so minded raise their right hands?"

The larger number of right hands rose in the air, and the sentence was pronounced that so soon as the doctor assured the authorities that the wounded men would take no harm from the exposure, the duelists, bound neck and heels, should be laid at the meeting of the four roads, there to remain four-and-twenty hours without food or water, and until that time each was to remain locked in a separate chamber.

"And now John Billington," continued Bradford

sternly, as the younger men were removed, “how hast thou to defend thyself from the charge of blood guiltiness in stirring up strife between these two ? ”

“ Nay, your worship, it was their own quarrel,” replied Billington hardily. “ I did but chance to pass and saw them at it, and so tarried a moment to see fair play.”

“ And to hound them on at each other, as if it were a bull-baiting for thine own amusement,” interposed Standish in a contemptuous tone. “ Nay, lie not about it, man ! I heard thee, and saw thee ! ”

“ Surely, Billington,” resumed the governor, “ thou hast not so soon forgotten how thou wast convened before us some weeks since, charged with insolence and disobedience to our captain, and with seditious speech anent the government. We did then speak of some such punishment as this for thee, but thy outcry of penitence and promise of amendment, coupled with the shame of chastising thee in sight of thine own wife and sons, was so great that we forgave thee, the more that Captain Standish passed over the affront to himself; but now we see that the penitence was but feigned, and the amendment a thing of naught, and much I fear me, John Billington, that an’ thou amend not thy ways, harsher discipline than we would willingly inflict will be thy portion in time to come.”

The governor spoke with more than usual solemnity fixing upon the offender a gaze severe yet pitiful and reluctant, as one who foresees for another a fate deserved indeed, and yet too terrible to contemplate. Perhaps before that astute and reflective mind there rose a vision of the gallows nine years later to be erected by his own order, whereon John Billington, deliberate murderer of John Newcomen, should expiate his crime and open the gloomy record of capital punishment in New England.

At the present moment, however, the offender slunk away with his reproof, and the meeting proceeded to consider other matters, for, while the new government felt itself competent to deal with matters of life and death, it also found no matter too trifling for its attention.

Four days later Edward Dotey and Edward Lister, their wounds comfortably healed, were brought out into the market place as in fond reminiscence of home the Pilgrims called what is now the Town Square of Plymouth, and each offender was solemnly tied neck and heels together,—an attitude at once ignominious and painful.

The governor, with Allerton his assistant, the captain, the elder, Winslow, Hopkins, and Warren stood formally arrayed to witness the execution of the sentence, which Billington was forced to carry out. The less important members of the community surrounded the scene, and from amid the fluctuating crowd murmurs of amaze, of pity, of approval, or the reverse became from time to time audible.

“ Nay, then, ‘t is a shaine to see Christian men so served, and they so scarce a commodity in these parts,” declared Helen Billington to her neighbor Mistress Hopkins, who nippingly replied,—

“ Mayhap we ‘ve mistook the men we ‘ve put in power.”

“ Ay,” returned the coarser malcontent. “ They passed by thy goodman, and put worse men over his head.”

“ Master Hopkins careth naught for such honors as these have to bestow. His name was made or ever he came hither,” replied Elizabeth a little coldly as she moved away.

“Glad am I to see that thy goodman leaveth the cord as slack as may be, Goody Billington,” whispered Lois, late maid to Mistress Carver, but now the promised second wife of Francis Eaton, who stood beside her, and overhearing the whisper said reprovingly,—

“Nay, wench, thou speakest foolishly. If evil-doers are to go unwhipt of justice how long shall this colony endure. See you not that if these roysterers had each killed the other, there had been two men the less to stand between your silly throats and the hatchets of the salvages?”

“Ay, there’s sound sense in that, Francis,” replied Lois yielding admiringly to the superior wisdom of her betrothed, but Helen Billington nodding and blinking, muttered to her boy John, as she leaned upon his shoulder,—

“Wait but till dark, when all the wiseacres are asleep, and see if thy daddy sets not these men free, ay, and puts weapons in their hands like enough, to revenge themselves withal.”

The offenders bound, and laid each upon his side on the bare ground, the court withdrew and the crowd dispersed. But scarce an hour had passed ere Hopkins presented himself before the governor and his assistant, at work over the colony’s records, those precious first minutes, now forever lost, and with an elaborately quiet and restrained demeanor said,—

“Master Bradford, yon poor knaves of mine are suffering shrewdly from cramps and shooting pains as well as from the ache of their scarce healed wounds. They promise in sad sincerity to amend their ways, and when all is said, they are good and kindly lads, and did but ape the fashions of their betters in the Old World.

May not I persuade your worship to look over their offense for this time, and to remit their pains and penalties as soon as may be?"

"Thou sayest they are penitent, good Master Hopkins?" asked Bradford judicially.

"Ay, and to my mind honestly so."

"We will speak with them, Master Allerton, and if the captain and the elder agree with me, Master Hopkins, thy petition is granted, for indeed it is to me more pain to make another suffer than to suffer myself, even as a father feels the rod upon his own heart the while he lays it on his son's back."

"And yet the warning that to spare the rod will spoil the child applies to the children of the State as well as to the household," remarked Allerton, whose lively son Bartholomew could have testified to his father's strict obedience to Solomon's precept.

The chiefs of the colony were soon reassembled about the grotesque figures of the suffering duelists, and with their approval, the governor having demanded and received ample professions of contrition, and promises of amendment, ordered Billington to release the prisoners, who shamefacedly crept away to their master's house, and thus ended the first and for many years the only duel fought upon New England soil.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CAPTAIN'S PIPE.

IT was a lovely evening in June, and, the labors of the day being ended, while the hour for nightly devotion had not yet come, Plymouth enjoyed an hour of rest.

Seven houses now lined The Street, leading from the Rock to the Fort, and of these the highest on the north-easterly side was that of Captain Standish, built so near to the Fort indeed, that John Alden, if so idly minded to amuse himself, could easily salute each gun of the little battery with a pebble upon its nose. He was in fact thus occupied on this especial evening, while the captain sitting upon a bench beside the cottage door smoked a pipe wondrously carved from a block of chalcedony by some "Ancient Arrowmaker" of forgotten fame, and presented to Standish by his admiring friend Hobomok, who, having silently studied at his leisure the half dozen principal men among the Pilgrims, had settled upon Standish as most nearly representing his ideal of combined courage, wisdom, and endurance, so that he already was beginning to be known as "the Captain's Indian," just as Squanto was especially Bradford's henchman.

"'T is a goodly sight — a sweet and fair country," said the Captain half aloud, and Alden just pausing to note that his last pebble had gone down the throat of the saker, turned to inquire, —

“ What is it, master ? ”

For reply the captain took the pipe from his mouth, and with the stem pointed to Manomet, where mile after mile of fresh young verdure rose steeply against the rosy eastern sky, while the sun sinking behind what was to be the Captain's Hill shot a flood of golden glory across the placid bay cresting each little wave with radiance, and burying itself at last among the whispering foliage of the mount.

“ Saw you ever a fairer sight, lad ? ”

“ Nay, 't is fair as the Hills of Beulah whereof the elder spake last night,” softly replied John.

“ And fairer, for we can see it with our eyes of to-day,” replied the captain dryly. The younger man glanced briefly at his master's face, and failing to read its complex expression, contented himself with a somewhat uneasy smile as he turned to gaze upon the scene in thoughtful silence.

Standish noting with one of his quick glances his follower's embarrassment, took counsel with himself, and as he quietly refilled his pipe said, —

“ Mark me well, lad, I mean not to cast aught of discredit on the elder's teaching, nor to shake any man's faith in Beulahs, or Canaans, or hills of Paradise, for doubtless Holy Writ gives warrant for such forecasting ; and surely approved masters of strategy, and warfare both offensive and defensive, like Moses, and David, and Joshua, did not fight for the guerdon of a fool's bauble, or a May-queen's garland. But yet, mind thee, John, there are other great soldiers given us as ensamples in that same Holy Writ who seemed to set no store upon the Beulahs, and cared naught for milk or honey ; men like Gideon, and Samson, and Saul, and

Joab ; and still the Lord of Hosts led these men forth, and fought for them and fended them, so long as they fought for themselves and were careful to catch the order and obey it. I know not, Jack, these matters are too mighty for a poor soldier like me to handle understandingly ; and still somehow it seemeth me that this same Lord of Hosts will know how to deal mercifully even with a rough, war-worn fellow like me, who repenteth him of his sins and hath freely given himself to do battle in Christ's name against all Heathenesse, and to stand forth with this handful of saints against His foes and theirs, and that, although he cannot clearly see the Hills of Beulah, nor cares for such luscious cates as suit some stomachs. Dost catch my meaning, boy ? ”

“ Ay, master, and well do I wish my hope of God's favor were as fairly founded ” —

“ Nay now, nay now, did not I this minute tell thee that I care naught for sweets ? Save thy honey for some maiden's lips. Ah, and now I think on 't, here is a quiet and leisure time wherein to study out the strategy of that wooing emprise I was telling thee of — nay, did I tell thee ? ”

“ Wooing — what — I — I know not fairly,” stammered John Alden, but the captain still gazing upon Hither Manomet, where now the purple bloom of twilight was replacing the glory of the sunset, marked not the pallor stealing the red from beneath the brown of the young fellow's cheek, nor heard the discordant falter of his voice.

“ Ay,” replied he thoughtfully, — “ my wooing of Priscilla Molines, thou knowest. I thought I spoke to thee of it, but at all odds the time has now well come when I should address the maid. I ought indeed to

have done it long ago, and mayhap she will be a bit peevish at the delay, for doubtless her father told her ere he died of our compact, but there has been no convenient season, and truth to tell, Jack, I have no great heart toward the matter — yon green plateau lies betwixt me and ” —

And in the sudden silence John Alden's gaze went out over the steel gray waters, out and out to the far horizon line where the rose tint had faded from the sky and a low line of fog gathered slowly and sadly.

“ I 'll tell thee, boy,” suddenly resumed the captain rising from the bench and confronting his companion, while lightly touching his breast with the mouthpiece of the pipe upon whose cold ashes John mechanically fixed his eyes, — “ thou shalt woo her for me.”

“ I — I woo her — nay, master, nay ” —

“ And why nay, thou foolish boy? 'T will be rare practice for thee against some of these lasses grow up, and thou wouldst fain go a-wooing on thine own account. Nay, then, can it be that a young fellow who would gayly go forth against Goliath of Gath were he in these parts is craven before the bright eyes and nimble tongue of a little maid? Dost think Priscilla will box thine ears? ”

“ Nay, but ” —

“ Nay me no buts and but me no nays, for the scheme tickles my fancy hugely, and so it shall be. Thou seest, Jack, it were more than a little awkward for me to show reason why I have not spoken sooner, and the fair lady's angry dignity will be appeased by seeing that I stand in awe of her, and woo her as princesses are wooed, by proxy. Thou shalt be my proxy, Jack, and see thou serve me not so scurvy a trick as — ha, here cometh the governor.”

And, in effect, Bradford striding up the hill with all the vigor of his one-and-thirty years was already so close at hand as to save John Alden the pain of a reply.

“Good e'en, Governor,” cried Standish going a step or two to meet his guest.

“Good e'en, Captain, — Alden. There’s more trouble toward about the Billingtons.”

“What now?” demanded the captain with a stern brevity auguring ill for the frequent offender.

“Nay, ‘t is no willful offense this time, nor is the father to blame except for not training his boys better; but the son John hath run away to go to the salvages his brother says, and the mother saith he is stolen, and whichever way it may be, he has been missing since yester even at bedtime, and now we have to go and look him up.”

“‘Ill bird of an ill egg,’ ” growled Standish. “Mayhap ‘t were better not to find him.”

“And yet we must,” replied Bradford gently. “And as Squanto reports that the boy shaped his course for Manomet, my idea is that it were well for us to take our boat and coast along the headland and so on in the course we came at first, observing the shore, and noting such points as may be of use in the future. Mayhap we shall come as far as the First Encounter, and make out whether those salvages whom Squanto calls the Nausets are still so dangerously disposed toward us. At any rate we will try to discover our creditors for the seed-corn springing so greenly over yonder.”

“Pity that Winslow hath gone to Sowams to visit Massasoit,” remarked the captain dryly. “We shall miss his subtle wit in these delicate affairs of state.”

"Yes, and if it comes to blows we shall miss no less Stephen Hopkins's doughty arm," replied Bradford. "But sith both are gone, we had better leave the Elder in charge of the settlement along with Master Allerton, John Howland, who is a stout man-at-arms, John Alden, Gilbert Winslow, Dotey, and Cooke."

"Seven men in all."

"Yes, and with Winslow and Hopkins away, that leaves ten of us to go on this expedition, and I shall take Lister lest he brawl with Dotey, and Billington not only that he is the boy's father, but lest he raise a sedition in the camp."

"Well thought on. I tell thee thou hast a head-piece of thine own, Will, though thou art so mild spoken."

Bradford laughed with a glance of affectionate recognition of the soldier's compliment, and then the two arranged the details of the proposed expedition, while Alden standing straight and still as a statue watched the gloom of night blotting all the color from sky, and sea, and shore, even as the fog crept stealthily in swallowing all before it, and a great dumb wave of sorrow and dismay surged up from his own heart, and swallowed all the brightness of his life.

Suddenly from the Town Square at the foot of the hill rose the sound of a drum not inartistically touched, and both the governor and the captain rose to their feet.

"Bart Allerton hath learned to use the drumsticks as if he had served with us in Flanders," said the soldier complacently, as they turned down the little sinuous footpath.

"Yes," replied the governor gravely. "He does credit to thy teaching, Captain, and yet methinks there

may be danger that a vain delight in his own performance may cause the lad, and haply others, to forget that this, for lack of a bell, is our call to prayer. Couldst thou find it in thy heart, Myles, to direct that in future the drum shall sound but three heavy and unmodulated beats?"

"Oh ay, if it will please thee better, Will. Didst ever read of the tyrant Procrustes?"

"What of him?"

"Only that he would force all men to fit to one measure, though he dragged the life out of them. Dost fancy the God to whom we shall presently pray is better pleased with a dreary noise than with some hint at melody? Alden, come on, lad, 'tis time for prayers, and thy woesome face suits the occasion. What's amiss, lad?"

"Naught's amiss, master," replied the youth more briefly than his wont, and with a sudden spring from a projecting boulder he passed the two elder men and arrived first at the Common house.

"That younker's face and voice are not so blithe as might be. Hast been chiding him, Myles?" asked Bradford as they followed down the hill.

"Nay," replied the captain. "But like enough he's thwarted at missing the chance of a brush with the redskins to-morrow, and 't is a pity."

"Nay, Myles, look not so pensive on 't," responded the governor laughing. "There are men, believe it if you can, who love the smell of roses better than of blood. To my fancy John Alden — but there, light jesting is surely ill befitting the hour of prayer."

CHAPTER XXIII.

“SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, JOHN!”

FURTHER information gathered by Squanto and Hobomok from the Indian guests who were constantly in and out of the village proved that John Billington had wandered as far as Manomet, and that Canacum, the sachem of that place, had sent him on with some Nauset braves who were visiting him, as a present or perhaps hostage to Aspinet, chief of the Nausets and Pamets. The course of the rescuing party was thus determined, and, apart from the recovery of little Billington, Bradford was glad of the opportunity of offering payment to the Nausets for the corn borrowed from the mysterious granary near the First Encounter, and also much desired to hear an explanation of the grave containing the bones of the French sailor and little child.

It was, therefore, with considerable satisfaction that he next morning led his little party to the water side, and embarked them just as the sun rising joyously from out the blue, blue sea, sent a handful of merry shafts to tip each wave with glory and glance in harmless flame from every point of armor or of weapon in the pinnace, as the crew moved every man to his appointed place, the captain pushing sturdily with an oar while John Alden, half in, half out the water, heaved mightily at the bows hanging at the foot of the Rock.

“Once more! Now again! There she floats!” cried the captain. “One more shove, John! There, there,

enough! Fare thee well, lad, and mind the business I bade thee take in hand!"

"Ay, master," replied the youth, but as he stepped upon the Rock, and shook the waters from his mighty limbs, he heaved a sigh so ponderous that surely it helped to fill the mainsail now curving grandly to the gathering breeze.

But the summer day ripened to noon, and waned until the sun all but touched the crest of Captain's Hill, before the young man gave over the work at which he had labored like a Titan all day long, and going down to the brook at a point where the captain and he had dug a semicircular basin and paved it about with white sea-pebbles by way of a lavatory, he made his toilet, chiefly by throwing the clear cool water in bucketfuls over his head and neck, and then rubbing himself with a coarse towel until the crisp hair curled vivaciously, and the fair skin glowed out from under its coat of sun-brown in strong relief to the white teeth and blue eyes that made the face so comely in its strength.

A little brushing of the dark doublet and leatherne small-clothes, the low russet boots and knitted hose that completed his costume, and the unwilling envoy strolled down the hill to Elder Brewster's cottage and paused unseen and unheard outside the open door. It was the quiet time in the afternoon when the rougher labors of the day were ended, and the housewife might rest herself with the more delicate tasks of spinning, knitting, or needlework, for it was in these, "the good old days" we all so plaintively lament, that the distich —

"Man may work from sun to sun
But woman's work is never done" —

originated, and was something more than a bitter jest.

In the elder's busy household all the women were using this hour for their own refreshment. Mistress Brewster was lying upon her bed, Mary Chilton had taken her knitting and gone to sit awhile with Desire Minter and Elizabeth Tilley, and Priscilla drawing her quaintly carved spinning-wheel into the middle of the room so that she could look out of the window giving upon the brook and distant Manomet, was spinning some exquisitely fine linen thread, with which she purposed to weave cambric delicate enough for kerchiefs and caps. As she spun, she sang as the birds sing, that is from the heart, and not from the score; and now it was a blithe chanson brought by her mother from her French home, and now it was a snatch of some Dutch folks-lied or some Flemish drinking-song, and again the rude melody of an old Huguenot hymn, the half devout, half defiant invocation of men who prayed with naked swords in their hands. But suddenly into the sonorous strains of Luther's Hymn broke the joyous trill of a linnet's song, and the bird alighting upon a neighboring poplar seemed challenging the unseen songster to a trial of skill. The stately hymn broke off in a little burst of laughter; and then accepting the challenge, the girl took up the linnet's strain in an unworded song, sweeter, richer, more full of joy, and love, and sunshine than his own, until the little fellow with an angry chirp and flirt of the wings flew onward to the forest where he knew no such unequal contest awaited him.

“Well done, maid!” exclaimed Alden stepping in at the open door. “Thou hast so outsung the bird that he hath flown.”

“Nay, methinks he flew because he saw an owl abroad, and owls are ever grawsome neighbors to poor

little songsters," replied Priscilla dryly, and, pressing the treadle swiftly she drew out her cobweb thread with such earnest care that she could not look up at the tall and comely guest who awkwardly stood awaiting some more hospitable greeting. Receiving none, he presently subsided upon a stool hard by the spinning-wheel, and after watching its steady whirl for some moments said, —

“ What a fine thread thou drawest, Priscilla.”

“ Tis hardly stout enough to hang a man, and yet stout enough for my purposes, good John.”

“ Wilt weave it on Master Allerton’s loom when ’t is done ? ”

“ Mayhap I ’ll weave it on a pillow into lace, as the maids in fair Holland are used to do.”

“ Dost know their art ? ”

“ Ay. Jeanne De la Noye to whom I writ a letter by thy hand, John, she taught me, and I overpassed my teacher ere I was done. What thinkst thou, John, would be said or done should I weave some ells of span-wide lace and trim my Sunday kirtle therewith ? Mistress White, nay, Mistress Winslow that is now, would rend it away with her own fingers.”

“ And yet Master Winslow weareth cambric ruffs on occasion, and his dame hath a paduasoy kirtle and mantle, and so had Mistress Carver, and some others of our company.”

“ Marry come up ! How wise the lad hath grown ! Hast been pondering women’s clothes instead of the books the Captain gives thee to study, John ? ”

A change passed over the young man’s face. The careless allusion had recalled his errand, and moreover linked itself with a memory Priscilla had willfully

evoked. He was silent for a moment, and then pushing his seat a little farther from the wheel he quietly said,—

“ Well do I like thy merry mood, Priscilla, and care not though thou flout me ever so sharply, but mine errand to-day is somewhat of importance, and I pray thee to listen seriously.”

“ Nay, good lad, waste not such solemnities on me. 'T will be Sunday in three days, and thou canst take the elder's place, and let him learn of thee how soberly and seriously to exhort a sinner.”

“ Priscilla, wilt thou be serious ? ”

“ As death, John. What is it ? ”

“ I writ a letter for thee to thy friend Jeanne De la Noye”—

“ 'T is a sad truth, John.”

“ And methought there was in it some word that pointed to — to ” —

“ Yes ; good youth, that pointed to — to — and what then ? ”

“ That pointed to some contract, or mayhap naught more than some understanding ” —

“ If 't was a word that pointed to any understanding of thee and thy stammerings, John Alden, I pray thee speak it without more ado. Say out what is in thy mind if indeed there is aught there.”

“ Well then, art thou promised to Jacques De la Noye, and is he coming here to wed thee ? ”

The rich color of Priscilla's cheek deepened to crimson and the slender thread in her hand snapped sharply, but in an instant she recovered herself, and deftly joining the thread exclaimed,—

“ See now what mischief thy folly hath wrought ! Of a truth there 's no call to complain of blindness in thy

speech now, Master Alden. But still I have noted that if thou canst drive a bashful youth out of his bashfulness, there are no bounds to his forwardness."

"Loth were I to offend thee, Priscilla, and that thou knowest right well, but I fain would have an answer to my query. If 't is a secret, thou knowest I will keep it."

"Nay, I 'll keep it myself, and not trouble thee with what proved too burdensome for myself."

"But Priscilla, I am sent to thee with a proffer of marriage, and if thou 'rt already bespoke 't is not fitting that thou shouldst hear it."

"Thou 'rt sent, John Alden!" exclaimed the girl dropping the thread, and pressing her foot upon the treadle until it creaked. "Who sent thee?"

"Captain Standish."

"Sent thee! Was it too much honor to a poor maid for him to do his own errand?"

"Nay, be not angered, Priscilla, although he feared thou wouldst be."

"Ah, he did fear it, did he. Then why did he do it?"

"Why, he feared that thou wert angry already, and he would have thee know he stood in terror, and dared not present himself" —

"John Alden, art thou and thy master joined in league to flout and insult me, an orphaned maid? If thou hast an errand from Captain Standish to me, say it out in as few words as may be, or I will never speak word to thee again."

Perhaps the sight of that suddenly pallid face, those blazing eyes and brave scornful mouth, steadied the young man's nerves, as cowards in the camp have been

known to become heroes in the field ; at any rate his brow cleared, his voice grew assured, and rising to his feet with a certain solemnity he said, —

"Thou 'rt right, Priscilla, and I have done sore discredit thus far to the honorable master on whose errand I come. Captain Standish, as no doubt thou knowest, spake with thy father before he died of a marriage in time to come between him and thee" —

"Nay, I knew it not, nor am bound by any such speech," interposed Priscilla hastily ; but Alden continued unmoved, —

"Captain Standish took it that thou didst know, and feared that thou hadst felt his silence to be some want of eagerness" —

"Ay, I see ! He feared that I was angered that he had not wooed me across his wife's and my father's graves, and so thrust thee forward to bear the first outburst of my fury ! 'T was kindly thought on if not overvaliant, and 't is an honorable, a noble office for thee, John, who hast at odd times thrown me a soft word thyself."

"Oh maiden, maiden, wilt thou trample to death the poor heart that thou knowest is all thine own ! I 'throw thee a soft word now and again' ! Why, thou knowest but too well how I hang like a beggar on thy footsteps to catch even a careless word that thou mayst fling to me ! Thou knowest that I love thee, maid, as blind men love sight, and dying men water, and" —

"*Then why don't you speak for yourself, John?*" demanded Priscilla quietly, and a dainty smile softened the proud curve of her lips, and a gleam of tenderness quenched the fire of her eyes ; but John, his eyes fixed upon the ground, saw it not.

“Ah Priscilla, ‘t is not kind to try me thus!” cried he. “Sure thou hast triumphed often enough in despising my humble suit, without wounding me afresh to-day, and when I fain would rally my poor wits to honorably fulfill the embassage that brings me here. Sith I may not hope to call thee mine, maiden, I could better bear to see thee the wife of the noble soldier whom I serve than of any other man, be he Fleming or Dutchman or what not, so that thou art not promised.”

“Go on, then, and say thy knight’s message most worthy squire, and let us make an end on ‘t.”

“Thou knowest the captain for thyself, Priscilla, but mayhap thou knowest not that he cometh of noble lineage, a race that hath borne coat-armor since Norman William led them across the Channel”—

“Didst not bring some heraldic tree or chart to dazzle mine eyes withal?” inquired Priscilla, mockingly; but the ambassador, determined not again to be turned from his purpose, went on,—

“Among his ancestors are men of noble deeds and proud achievements who have carried the name of Standish of Standish in the forefront of battle, and in King’s Councils, and have ranked among the princes of the idolatrous Church to which they still cling; but among them all, Priscilla, hath never risen a braver, or a nobler, or a more honorable man than he who woos thee”—

“Did he bid thee say all that also?”

“Nay, Priscilla, there’s a time for all things, and I must feel it unworthy of thy womanhood to so perversely jeer and flout at a good man’s love, when ‘t is honestly offered thee.”

“Nor would I, John. But I have heard naught of any love offered me by Myles Standish. Thou hast

“Why don’t you speak for yourself, John?”



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offered in his name some coat-armor, and a long lineage, and courage both ancestral and of his own person, and — what else? I forget, but surely there was no love among these commodities. Didst drop it by the way, or did the captain forget to send it, John?"

" Mayhap, he kept it back to give it thee by word of mouth, Priscilla, and if he did, it is a treasure even thou shouldst not despise, for never did I see a nature at once so brave, so strong, and so tender. Thou knowest how sorely ill I was six weeks or so by-gone, and none did a hand's turn for me but the captain, nor needed to, for never was nurse so delicate of touch, so unwearied, so cheerful, and so full of device as he. No woman ever equaled him in those matters where we long for woman's tendance, and yet never a soldier played the man more valiantly where man's work was in hand. Ah Priscilla, 't is a heart of gold, a man among ten thousand, a tower of strength in danger, and a tender comforter in suffering that is offered thee — be wise beyond thy years, and answer him comfortably."

" And hast thou done, John? Hast said all thy say?"

" Ay, maid."

" Then clear thy memory of it all, and make room for the answer I will give thee."

" And let it be a gentle one, Priscilla."

" Oh, thou knowest how to dress an unwelcome message in comely phrase better than any man of mine acquaintance, unless it be Master Winslow," retorted Priscilla bitterly. " So try thy skill on simple NO, for 't is all I have to say."

" But Priscilla, but maiden, bethink thee — be not so shrewd of tongue" —

" Nay, wilt have my reasons, Master Envoy? Well

then, I care not for a man who cares not to do his own wooing. I care not for a man so well assured that I will be held by what he avers is my dead father's bidding, that he can let weeks and months roll by or ever he finds time to convince himself of the matter. I care naught for coat-armor, nor for pedigree, I, whose forbears were honest bourgeoisie of Lyons who scrupled not to give up all for conscience sake, while this man is neither Papist like his kinsfolk, nor Independent like these he lives among. And I care not for a red beard, nor for widowers, nor for men old enough to be my sire" —

"Nay, he is but six-and-thirty, maiden."

"And I am naught-and-twenty, and I am a-weary of thy chat, John Alden, and I fain would be alone, so I wish thee good e'en — and a keener wit."

"But Priscilla," gasped the poor fellow as the wheel was pushed so suddenly aside that he had to spring out of its way, while its mistress whirled past him and up the clumsy stair leading to her nook in the loft of the cabin.

"But Priscilla!" came back in wrathful mimicry from the head of the stair, and while Alden still stood bewildered, in at the open door flocked Mary Chilton, and Desire, and Elizabeth, their girlish laughter bubbling over at some girlish jest, and with a muttered greeting Alden stalked through their midst and was gone.

"He came looking for Priscilla, and is grumly at not finding her," whispered Elizabeth Tilley; but Mary Chilton with a wise nod replied, as one who knows, —

"Did he but know it, she's not ill inclined to him when all is said. Unless I sore mistake she'll say yea next time he asks her."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MYSTERIOUS GRAVE.

“A FAIR and goodly day ! ” exclaimed Standish ever sensitive to the aspects of nature, although never allowing himself to be mastered by any extremity of weather.

“Ay,” replied Bradford. “And yet methinks that cloud rising over Manomet hath a stormy look.”

“Let us once weather the Gurnet’s Nose, and a south wind will not harm us,” ventured Billington, whose out-of-door prowlings had at least made him weatherwise.

“Ay, if south wind is all that it means,” said Doctor Fuller gravely. “But to my mind yon cloud is of no common kind. It minds me shrewdly of those whirlwind or cyclone clouds that used to fright us in the China Seas when I sailed them as a lad.”

“Say you so, Surgeon ! ” replied Bradford looking uneasily at the cloud rapidly rising and enlarging in the southern horizon. “Be ready with the sheets, Peter Browne and Cooke, and Francis Eaton had best stand with Latham at the helm.”

“Look ! Look you there ! ’Tis a waterspout ! ” cried Fuller, pointing excitedly at the cloud, which, driven on with furious force by an upper current of wind unfeet below, was now bellying in a marked and abnormal fashion, while from the lowest point of the convexity appeared a spiral column of dense vapor rapidly elongating itself toward the sea whose waters

assumed a black and sullen aspect, disturbed by choppings counter currents of short waves, which gradually, as the waterspout neared them, fell into its rotary motion, rising at the centre of the whirlpool into a column of foaming water, a liquid stalagnite climbing to meet the stalactite bending to it from above.

“If we had but a heavy gun!” cried Warren. “They say to hit the waterspout in the centre where it joins the other from below will disperse it.”

“Knocks the wind out of it,” explained Billington.

“But we have nothing better than these bird guns,” cried Standish contemptuously touching with his foot the pile of weapons covered with a tarpaulin lying in the bottom of the boat. “And it drives down upon us like a charge of horse. Here, let me to the helm.”

“There is no way upon the boat, Captain,” expostulated Eaton. “No man can steer without a wind.”

“Thou ’rt right, friend,” replied the captain gravely, as he felt the rudder give beneath his hand. “There ’s naught to do but tarry until Master Waterspout declarereth his pleasure.”

“Until God declareth His pleasure,” amended Bradford quietly. “Men, let us pray.”

And baring his head the governor poured forth a strong and manful petition to Him who rideth upon the wings of the wind and reigneth a King forever over His own creation.

Standish standing upright beside the useless tiller bared his head and listened reverently, but always with an eye to the waterspout and to the clouds, and as a deep-throated Amen rose from his comrades he gave the tiller a shove and joyously cried, —

“A puff, a breath! Enough to steer us past!” And

the boat feeling her helm again careened gently to the little gust of wind out of the west, and slid away upon her course, while the waterspout, more furious in its speed at every instant, swept past and out to sea, where it presently broke and fell with a thunderous explosion.

“Another crowning mercy!” exclaimed Bradford devoutly, and Standish answered with his reticent smile,—

“Had Master Jones of the *Mayflower* been here, he would have more than ever felt ‘tis better to be friends than foes with prayerful men.”

To the waterspout succeeded light and baffling winds so that labor as they might, it was fully dark when the Pilgrim pinnace entered what is now Barnstable, then Cummaquid Harbor. Anchoring for safety, they lay down to get such rest as the position afforded, and woke betimes in the morning to find themselves high and dry in the centre of the harbor, the channel encircling them and making up toward the land. Upon the shore as seen across this channel appeared some savages gathering clams and muscles.

Bradford at once dispatched Squanto and Tockamahamon, who had come along as guides and interpreters, to interview these men and barter for some of the shellfish, but in a very short time the envoys came splashing merrily back with an invitation for the white men to land and breakfast with Janno, the chief of the Mattakees, who was, the fishermen said, close at hand. They also corroborated the statement that the missing boy had gone down the Cape with the Nausets, and would be found at Eastham, Aspinet’s headquarters.

“I see no reason for gainsaying such a comfortable proposal,” said Bradford turning with a smile to Standish who cheerily replied,—

“Nor I, so that they leave hostages aboard, and we carry every man his piece ashore.”

“We must e’en wade for it, sith there is neither dry ground for footing nor water for swimming,” suggested Browne stripping off hose and shoon; but as Bradford and Standish began to follow his example they were prevented by the Indians, who offered each a back to the two chiefs, at the same time intimating to the others that if they would but wait all the company should be similarly accommodated. The doctor accepted, but Browne and the rest preferred their own legs as a dependence, and the whole party presently reached shore, where Janno, the handsome and courteous young chief of the Mattakees, stood with several of his puiases or nobles around him ready to receive them. Squanto at once stood forth as interpreter, and so flowery and mellifluous were the phrases of welcome that he interpreted, that the captain edging toward Bradford muttered, —

“I hope Master Warren will look well after the hostages left aboard, for all this is too sweet to be wholesome. I mistrust treachery, Governor.”

“Nay, I mistrust Squanto, Captain,” replied Bradford laughing. “The poor fellow doth glorify himself at some cost to the truth, I fancy.”

“Beshrew me but before another month I’ll know enough of their jargon to need no lying interpreter,” muttered Standish, and he kept his word.

The Indian breakfast, already nearly ready, proved both toothsome and plentiful. It consisted of lobsters, clams, and muscles, both cooked and raw, ears of green maize roasted in the husk, and no-cake, that is to say, pounded corn mixed with water and baked in the ashes, the germ and animus of hoe-cake, bannocks, Johnny-

cake, and all the various forms of maize-bread so well known throughout our land.

Breakfast over Janno rather timidly inquired if the white chiefs would permit the visit of an old squaw of his tribe who much desired to see them.

“Surely if the good woman hath occasion to speak with us,” replied Bradford amiably. “Why doth the chief seem to mistrust our willingness?”

“Squaw no speak to brave in council,” explained Squanto with an air of shocked propriety; but before he could further explain a bowed and decrepit figure emerged from one of the little huts on the edge of the woods and slowly approached the white men who stepped forward to meet her, desiring Squanto to assure her of welcome. Coming so close to the little group that Standish muttered, “Sure she is minded to salute us,” the poor old crone peered into the face of one after another of the white men, then wofully shook her head and began to mutter in her own tongue with strange gesticulations, but as he heard them Squanto uttered a shrill cry of terror, and the sachem stepping forward spoke some words of stern command, before which the old woman humbly bowed and became silent.

“What is it? Would she curse us? What is her grievance? What is her story?” demanded Bradford half indignantly, and Squanto, after some conference with the sachem, informed them that this woman, once called Sunlight-upon-the-Waters, but now known as The-Night-in-Winter, had been mother of seven tall sons who filled her wigwam with venison, and shared their corn and tobacco with her; but three of these sons were among the captives entrapped and sold to slavery by Hunt, and the other four had perished in the plague

brought down upon the red men by the curse of The-White-Fool who died about the same time; and thus The-Night-in-Winter, having just cause, hated the white men as she hated death and the devil, and wished to curse them as The-White-Fool had cursed her people, but the sachem would not let her, and now she was doubly bereft of her children, since she might not even avenge them.

“ ‘T is a piteous tale,’ ” said Bradford gently when Squanto had finished. “ And we cannot be amazed that this poor heathen mother should thus feel. There is warrant for it among the classics, Surgeon ; Medea and others were moved in the same fashion. But Squanto, explain to her that we and all honest white men abhor the course of Master Hunt, and had we found him at such commerce we would have delivered her sons, and thee too, Squanto, out of his hands. Tell her our mind is to deal honestly and Christianly by all men, and here, give her this fair chain, and this length of red cloth. Tell her that she would do ill to curse us, for we are friends to her and her people.”

“ And ask who was The-White-Fool, and what his story,” demanded Standish as Squanto finished rendering the governor’s message.

“ Squanto know that in himself. Every Pokanoket know that,” replied Squanto, while Janno muttered gloomily in his own tongue, —

“ All red men know The-White-Fool’s curse. All feel it.” So Squanto in his broken yet picturesque phrases told how “ many snows ago ” a large French ship was wrecked farther down the Cape and nearly everything aboard was lost. Several of her crew, however, came safely ashore and made a sort of camp with some earth-work defenses on the mouth of the Pamet River.

"Why men, we saw it, and mused upon the marks of European skill and training," exclaimed Standish.

"Ay, and the house hard by, and the marvelous grave with the fair-haired man and infant so curiously embalmed," added Fuller.

"Truly, this is passing strange!" murmured Bradford. "But get on with thy story, Tisquantum."

The Frenchmen were quiet and peaceable enough, Tisquantum could not but allow, and yet his people would not permit them to dwell unmolested, perhaps from some vague fear of ancient prophecy that a pale-faced race should come from the rising sun and drive the red men into the western seas; perhaps from some race-hatred lying below the savage's power of expression; at any rate, as Tisquantum finally declared with a significant gesture,—

"Sagamore, powahs, pnieeses, braves, all men say, It is not good for pale men with hair like the sunrise to live among the red men whose hair is like the night. Let them be gone!"

"And what did the red men do about it, Squanto?" asked Standish sternly, while in his eyes kindled the danger light before which Squanto quailed, yet sullenly replied,—

"Red man find what you call wolf around his wig-wam, red man send arrow through his head."

"Do you mean, you heathen, that you murdered these helpless, shipwrecked white men? Murdered them in cold blood?" demanded Standish, seizing Gideon's hilt and half drawing him from his scabbard.

"Tisquantum not here. Tisquantum not Mattakee, not Nauset; Tisquantum Patuxet, where white men live," hastily replied Squanto; while Bradford suggested in a

rapid aside, "Best leave go thy sword and restrain thy wrath, Captain, or we be but dead men. Look at the faces of those men behind the sachem. Already they finger their tomahawks."

"More like, thy timidity will give the savages courage to fall upon us, and we shall share the fate of these, who though naught but Frenchmen were at least white, and wore breeches," retorted Standish angrily. The color flashed into Bradford's cheek, but after an instant's silence he quietly replied, —

"Thou knowest well enow, Standish, that my timidity is not for myself but for these, and yet more for the helpless ones we have left behind. I trust when it comes to blows, the Governor of Plymouth will be found where he belongs, next to her fiery Captain."

"Be content, Will, be content. Once more thou 'rt right and I all wrong. 'T is not the first time nor the last, but let us ask in all patience what these fellows mean with their White-Fool. Sure they have not made me out so suddenly as this, have they ? "

"Nay, Myles, I trow no man but thyself will ever call thee fool, nay, nor overly white, either !" and glancing at the Captain's bronzed face lighted once more by its smile of grim humor, Bradford turned to Squanto and bade him explain in the hearing of both savages and white men the meaning of this reference, and also the fate of the French mariners cast ashore at Eastham.

Squanto nothing loth to display his oratory struck an attitude, and with native eloquence and much gesticulation described, first, the storm which four years ago had driven the French brig upon the sands ; then the efforts of the mariners to launch their boats, their defeat,

and the breaking up both of boats and brig ; then the arrival upon shore of thirteen men, two of whom died of wounds and exhaustion. The eleven survivors finding some wreckage upon the beach proceeded the next morning to build themselves a shelter, and finally erected the cabin and threw up the earthwork discovered by the Pilgrims in their second exploration.

Up to this point the Indians had been content to curiously watch the proceedings of these interlopers, but finding that they were establishing themselves permanently, they held a council and resolved that they should die, partly in atonement for the outrage done to the red men some two years before by Hunt the kidnapper, and partly from some vague fear lest the strangers with their superior knowledge and appliances should conquer and injure the proper owners of the soil.

Not choosing to assault them openly, for the men were brave, alert, and well armed, the Indians laid in wait around the spring where they must daily go for water, watched them as they went afield in pursuit of game, in fact harassed them at every turn, until of the eleven but three were left alive, and they, so broken in strength, courage, and hope, that they were easily captured and reduced to slavery. One remained here at Nauset, and the other two were sent, one to the Massachusetts, the other to the Namasket tribes, where they were kept as the mock and victims of the brutal sport of the savages. The one who remained at Nauset was the best looking, and evidently the most attractive of the three, and from Squanto's description seemed to have been an officer, and a very attractive young man. The-White-Birch, sister of Aspinet, chief of the Nausets, having fixed her regards upon the prisoner, discovered

these peculiarities, and one day when the boys of the village were amusing themselves with seeing how near they could shoot their blunted arrows to the prisoner's eyes without putting them out, she stepped forward, and, Pocahontas-like, announced that she took this man for her husband, and as such claimed his release from torture. Her demand was complied with, and the half dead victim unbound and informed of his new honors ; but it was too late — want, misery, and cruelty had done their work, and the poor fellow's wits had fled. He accepted the tender care and affection of The-White-Birch as a child might have done, but the joyous gallantry of the debonair young French officer was a thing of the past, and the bridegroom had become as completely the child of nature as his bride. He was adopted into the tribe, and the Indian name given him, in no spirit of taunt or contempt, but simply as a descriptive appellation, meant The-White-Fool.

They were married, these two strange lovers, and lived in the cabin built of ship's planks by The-White-Fool's dead comrades. In due time a son was born to them, the idol of his mother's heart, and the constant companion of the father, who seemed to find in the child some link with his own stray wits ; but when the boy was about three years old the poor exile was seized with a fever, and in his delirium escaping from his tender nurse stalked naked through the village proclaiming in the native tongue that the wrath of God hung over this people and this land, because of the cruel wrong they had done to him and to his comrades ; and he foretold that before seven snows had covered his grave, white men from over the sea should come like the wildfowl in the spring and settle down upon the creeks and ponds, and fill the

forest with their cry, and the red men should melt away as the snow melts and their place be no more seen.

It was really worth something to hear Squanto declaim this wild prophecy with the shrill voice and fevered gestures of the delirious captive; and as they caught his meaning the pniezes around Janno stirred in their places, laid hand upon the tomahawk at each man's girdle, and cast menacing looks upon the strangers.

“Have a care, Squanto! Say no more on that head, or thou 'lt stir up strife afresh,” muttered Bradford in the interpreter's ear, while Standish fixed his eyes upon Janno ready to sacrifice him at the first hostile movement. But the young chief casting a meaning glance around the circle said quietly, —

“The-White-Birch was of the blood of Aspinet my brother, and The-White-Fool was her husband.”

“Well said, Chief!” exclaimed Standish who had already mastered much of the Indian language, and in accordance with his late resolve soon became the most expert interpreter in the colony, while Bradford nodding said, “Go on, Squanto!”

Little however remained to tell. The ill-starred Frenchman died within a few hours of his prophecy, and hardly had The-White-Birch laid him in his honored grave when she was called to bury her little boy, whom the father had named Louis, along with him. Then she set off alone to find the comrades of her lost love at Namasket, and Shawmut, that they might with her lament his death; but whether illness came upon her and she crept aside to die, or haply some wild creature slew and devoured her, or in her maze of grief she strayed away and starved in the limitless woods, none ever knew; she never was heard of again.

“And the other two captives?” inquired Standish.

“The Feast-of-Green-Corn before the last one, Captain Dermer carried them away in his ship,” replied Squanto proud of his English and his information.

“Ay, ay, and now we understand why these Nauset Indians attacked us at the First Encounter,” said Standish.

“Especially as they had probably watched us stealing their corn,” added Fuller dryly.

“Borrowing, not stealing, Surgeon,” retorted Bradford briskly. “And a part of our errand to the First Encounter is to satisfy our creditor for the debt. Let us be going.”

An hour later the shallop, now riding gayly upon the flood tide, put forth from Barnstable Harbor, carrying not only its own crew, but Janno with several of his followers, he having volunteered as guide and negotiator with Aspinet for the restoration of little Billington.

The voyage prospered, and before night the boy, decked with strings of beads and various savage ornaments, was restored to his guardians by Aspinet himself; while the first red man allowed to come on board the shallop was the owner of the corn “borrowed” by the Pilgrims, who now repaid its value twofold by an order for goods to be delivered at Plymouth. But more important than boy or corn, at any rate to the ears of Standish, was a report here received that the Narragansetts, their friend Massasoit’s neighbors and deadly foes, had made a raid upon his domains and carried him away prisoner. Also that one of Massasoit’s pnieeses called Corbitant had become an ally of the Narragansetts, and was now at Namasket, only fourteen miles from Plymouth, trying to raise a revolt against both his

chief and the white men their allies. He was also fiercely denouncing Squanto, Hobomok, and Tockamahamon as renegades and traitors to their own people, who should be at once put to death.

This news was so alarming that without waiting for trade, or for the feast offered to them, the Pilgrims at once set sail, and after stormy weather and sundry adventures arrived safely at home toward night of the third day from their departure. John Billington was received with vociferous joy by his mother, treated to a lithe bundle of birch rods by his father, and assaulted by his brother, who at once fought him for the possession of the bead necklaces and other gauds he had brought home. The men of the colony were meantime hearing the report brought in by Nepeof, a sachem just from Namasket, of the treacherous proceedings there, and before they had been three hours at home Squanto and Hobomok were dispatched to discover the truth of the matter, while Nepeof was held as a hostage.

CHAPTER XXV.

A LITTLE DISCIPLINE.

“AND how sped you in your errand, Master Envoy?” inquired Standish as, lighted pipe in hand, he once more seated himself upon the bench outside his cabin door to enjoy the sunset hour.

But at the sudden question John Alden’s face flushed deeper than the sunset, and he stammered, “I am so blundering, Master—I told the maiden all you bade me, but—but”—

“But what, thou stammering idiot!” roared the captain, his serene brow suddenly overcast, and the red surging up to his own brow. “Dost mean to say the girl flouted the suit of—nay, then, what dost thou mean? Speak out, man, and be not so timorous!”

“Here is Giles Hopkins!” exclaimed John, as feet were heard running up the hill, and the captain angrily turned to meet the new-comer, shouting,—

“Well, what dost thou want, youngster? Is a man never to be rid of half-wit boys in this place!”

“Please, Captain, the governor desires you to come in haste to a sudden Council. The Indians are come in, and methinks”—

“And who in Beelzebub’s name cares what thou thinkst!” shouted the captain. “Begone before I box thy malapert ears.” And driving the lad before him he strode down the hill without another word or look at John, who grinding his heel into the turf muttered,—

“And now he’s angered, and beshrew me if I could not find it in my heart to wish Priscilla had said him yea, rather than nay. It were easier to bear her scorn of me if I knew that he was content. ‘T is not so hard to suffer loss if a dear friend gains by that same loss.”

Meantime Standish striding wrathfully down the hill met Priscilla as she darted out of the door of the elder’s house. At sight of him she stopped short, coloring scarlet, and yet her whole face gleaming with a wicked inclination to laugh.

The captain also hesitated a moment, and then removing his barret cap with a bow whose stately courtesy recalled his lineage he said,—

“Pardon me, Mistress Molines, for what it seems was undue presumption. May I ask if the Council is convened here or at the Common house ?”

“At the Common house, Captain; but indeed and by my faith I know not”—

“Pardon if I venture to cut you short, Mistress, but I am summoned in haste to the Council.”

And with another formal bow the captain hastened on, leaving Priscilla biting her lip and staring after him, half angry, half amused. “One could be proud of him —if— if— Oh heart, heart! What is’t thou’rt clamoring for! Well—at least I can go and make a posset for my dear dame, and the rest may wait.” And with a sigh and a smile and a blush the girl turned back to the things of the hour.

“Now here’s a coil, Captain!” exclaimed Bradford as Standish entered the large room where about a dozen of the men of the colony were assembled in informal council, while in the midst stood Hobomok, his red skin streaming with perspiration and stained with travel,

while his usually impassive face bore an expression of genuine grief and dismay.

“What is it? Ha, Hobomok returned alone! ”

“Yes, and with evil tidings,” replied the Governor. “He and Squanto reached Namasket early this morning and sought to conceal themselves in a house belonging to Squanto, though now lent to a kinsman. But some one betrayed them to Corbitant, who was vaporizing around the village calling upon the men to rise in revolt against Massasoit and deliver him up to the Narragansetts, and saying that we white men should all be slain, and also those who have made alliance with us, for already he had news of our visit to Nauset, and the contract made with Aspinet, and Canacum, and Iyanough. While yet he raved against Squanto, and Hobomok, and Tockamahamon, a traitor told him that the two first were hiding in the village, and he swore a great oath by all his gods that they should die, especially Squanto, in whom, said he, the white men will lose their tongue” —

“What meant he by that, Governor? ” demanded Warren.

“Why, that he is our interpreter,” sharply replied Standish. “What else should he mean? What next, Governor? ”

“Next they circumvented Squanto in his cabin, and Corbitant seizing him held a knife to his throat, mocking and taunting him as is their fashion, while two fell upon Hobomok, but he being a lusty fellow and quick, broke from them and fled hither so fast as legs could carry him. You see the condition he is in.”

“And left thy comrade to die! ” ejaculated Standish looking scornfully at the Indian, who humbly replied in his own tongue, —

“ Hobomok only one man. Corbitant many men. Squanto perhaps dead, but the white man will send a hundred of his enemies to be his servants in the Happy Land. A brave fears not to die, if he may be avenged.”

“ Ha! ‘T is the savage philosophy, and not a bad one,” said Standish, and although the elder raised stern eyes of rebuke upon the reckless soldier he continued,—

“ And I shall lead our forces to avenge both the death of our servant and Massasoit’s capture, shall I not, brethren? What is your will?”

“ Sound policy dictates that if our allies are to respect us, or our enemies fear us, we should not suffer such an affront as this to pass,” declared Winslow. “ England hath never yet borne that her flag should be insulted, and we are Englishmen.”

“ You are right, Winslow,” replied Bradford solemnly. “ And loth though we may be to shed the blood of these men, whom we fain would convert to friends and Christians, it is my mind that in this instance we are bound to deal with them as with our own children, whom we indeed chastise, but still with an eye to their own future happiness.”

“ Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby,” quoted the Elder sententiously, while Standish stood impatiently twisting his moustache, and glancing around the assembly as if selecting his men.

“ And now, having chapter and verse for avenging this affront, let us set about doing it,” exclaimed he as several of the company murmured Amen to the Elder’s approved quotation. But Bradford fixed his steady

eyes upon the soldier's face for a moment before he somewhat coldly asked, —

“ How many men do you think it best to take, Captain Standish? ”

“ Ten. Hopkins, the Surgeon, Winslow, Browne, Howland, Gilbert Winslow, Billington, Eaton, Dotey, and Lister,” replied Standish promptly, and then with his peculiarly winning smile he added, —

“ You see I leave the governor, with Master Allerton his assistant, to guide the colony, and the elder to pray for our success, and Master Warren for a councilor, and the rest to carry on our various labors and protect the weaklings.”

“ It is a good division it seemeth to me. What say you all, brethren? ” asked the governor still gravely, and one by one each man signified his assent, only Howland coming close to the captain asked, —

“ May not Alden go with us, Captain? He hath a very pretty fashion with his weapon.”

“ Am I captain, or art thou, John Howland? ” growled the leader, and as all turned out of the house to prepare for the march in the following dawn, Bradford laid his hand upon his friend's shoulder and walked along with him.

“ What ails thee, Myles? Thou 'rt sorely chafed at something. Is aught amiss that I can help? ”

“ Nay, Will, 't is naught, and less than naught. 'T is but a new knowledge of mine own unworthiness. Sure 'never such a fool as an old fool' is a good proverb.”

“ 'T is not to a fool that we trust the lives of ten out of our nineteen men,” said Bradford quietly.

“ Oh, I can fight well enow,” replied the soldier bitterly. “ 'T is my trade, and all I'm fit for. Ay, and in

my mood to-day I 'll be fain to fight. I only fear this knave Corbitant hath run away."

" If so, he confesses his defeat without the need of bloodshed," suggested Bradford. " And at all odds, Standish, our policy is to make friends by fair means if we may. Remember, if Squanto is not harmed, Corbitant is not to be touched. If indeed our poor friend is slain, then have you warrant for Corbitant's head, and the lives of all who helped to murder Squanto. Thou 'rt too honorable a man and too good a Christian to let thine own chafed humor interfere with justice."

" I am too well drilled a soldier to disobey orders, Governor," replied the Captain briefly, and so they parted, nor did Standish and Alden exchange a sentence that night save barely these, —

" In one word, John, was the answer to my message yes or no ? "

" Dear Master, it was no."

" I bade thee answer in one word, and thou hast disobeyed me in using five."

The next morning brought one of those furious summer storms peculiar to August, and the little force, loaded with armor, weapons, and knapsacks, found themselves much distressed by the humid heat. Reaching a sheltered spot about a mile from Namasket, Standish resolved to remain there until dark, giving the men opportunity for rest and refreshment, and trusting to the storm and the night to cover his attack upon a foe ten times his own number.

As darkness closed in upon the encampment, the captain roused himself from a soldier's nap, and briefly ordered, —

" Eat what provisions you have left in your knap-

sacks, men, and empty your flasks. Then pile and leave both beside this rock. Those of us who are alive in the morning will subsist upon the enemy. Those who are not will feel no lack."

Soon after dark the little troop set forth, but Hobomok, deceived by the darkness and the rain, missed the route, and for three weary hours the men floundered around in the dripping forest, the guide wisely keeping out of the captain's reach, until in a gleam of watery moonlight Winslow recognized a peculiar clump of trees which he had noticed upon his late journey with Hopkins to visit Massasoit; and Hobomok recovering from his bewilderment led the way as fast as the men could follow him, until in the edge of a large clearing he paused, and pointing to a detached hut whispered, —

"Corbitant sleep there."

"Now God be praised that there is a chance of fighting rather than floundering!" piously exclaimed Standish, and with brief exact phrases he proceeded to set the battle in array. Eight men were to silently surround the house, their pieces ready, and their orders to cut down if necessary any who should attempt to escape from the house. Standish and Winslow, followed by Hobomok, marched meantime straight into a hut, and the captain in a loud voice demanded, —

"Where is Corbitant? Give him up and no one else shall be harmed!"

A moment of panic-stricken silence ensued, and then through the darkness was heard the indefinite rustling sound of living creatures seeking covertly to escape from an enclosure.

"Look to it, outside!" shouted Standish. "Let no man pass your guard! Hobomok, tell them that we

will harm none if they give up Corbitant and those who helped him to murder Tisquantum ! ”

But the hubbub increased momently, and presently a shout of “ Back ! Back ! ” from without was followed by a loud shriek in a woman’s voice.

“ Fools ! ” roared Standish in the native tongue. “ Keep still. Stay in the house. We hurt none but Corbitant ! ”

Yet still the tumult grew ; the savages trusting no promises, endeavored to escape through the various openings of the wigwam, and although the sentinels were as careful as possible, and heartily desirous of avoiding bloodshed, several of the Indians were more or less hurt, while the half-grown boys perceiving the immunity of the women from harm, ran from one door to the other crying out, —

“ Neen squaes ! Neen squaes ! ” (I am a girl ! I am a girl !)

The women also hung around Hobomok, pulling at his hands and clothing, for attention, while they shrieked, “ Oh Hobomok, I am thy friend ! Thou knowest I am thy friend ! ”

Winslow meantime had stirred up the embers of a fire near the doorway of the hut, and the flame leaping out cast a wild and fitful glare over the scene, in the midst of which Hobomok, climbing the stout pole in the centre of the cabin, thrust his head through the smoke-hole at the top, and after emitting a hideous war-whoop shouted the names of Tisquantum and Tock-amahamon at the top of his voice, for one of the women had assured him that the former was alive, and that Corbitant was already many miles on his homeward way.

Not two minutes had elapsed, when an answering whoop was heard from the cluster of huts forming the village of Namasket, now the town of Middleboro', and an irregular stream of warriors, headed by Tisquantum in person, came running toward the beleaguered hut.

The struggle was now over, for so soon as the *casus belli* was disproved by Squanto's appearance, the capture of Corbitant was no longer desirable, and Standish ordered his men to sheathe their swords and release their prisoners. Those who had been wounded by persisting in trying to escape were attended to by Surgeon Fuller, and by Standish's invitation returned to Plymouth with their friendly conquerors to receive a certain amount of petting by way of compensation for their wounds, although the captain did not fail to point out that if they had believed and obeyed him, they need not have been hurt at all.

Tisquantum shrewdly flattered at the importance set upon his life by his white friends, seated himself with them around the new-fed fire, and with much gesticulation and flowery forms of speech related how, by his combined prowess and subtlety, he had forced Corbitant to release him, and finally to leave Namasket with his warriors, not, however, without hideous threats of what should befall that village if it persisted in an alliance with the white men, who were soon to be exterminated with all their friends.

“ Ha ! We will send an embassage to this haughty sachem, with some counter promises and warnings,” exclaimed Standish in hearing this part of the report ; and at the last moment, before the little army with its captives left the place upon the following morning, a runner was dispatched to follow Corbitant, and assure him from

The-Sword-of-the-White-Men, as Standish now began to be called among the Indians, that unless Massasoit returned in safety from the country of the Narragansetts, whither he had been beguiled, the death of the great sachem should be visited upon Corbitant and all his tribe to the uttermost, and that if anything more was heard of sedition and treachery as preached either among the Namaskets or elsewhere, Corbitant should find that no distance and no concealment should avail to save him from punishment.

The message was duly delivered, and so convincing did its terrors, combined with the prompt action of the white men prove, that various sachems who had hitherto held aloof, even those of the Isles of Capawack, now called Martha's Vineyard, sent to beg for a treaty of peace and mutual support; and in the end Corbitant prayed the kind offices of Massasoit, now restored to his kingdom, to make his submission to the white men.

But though so fair in outward seeming, this peace was but a hollow one, and one more lesson was needed before the Indians became in very truth the friends and allies of the white men.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE FIRST THANKSGIVING DAY OF NEW ENGLAND.

“OH Priscilla, girl, what thinkst thou is toward now?” demanded Mary Chilton, running down to the spring where her friend was sprinkling and turning a piece of coarse linen spun and woven by her own hands for domestic use; but straightening herself at the merry summons, her dark eyes lighted with animation as she responded in the same tone,—

“The governor is fain to marry thee, and the elder is ready to give his blessing. Is’t so?”

“Thou foolish girl! It’s not at me Master Bradford looks oftenest, not nigh as often as the captain looks at thee, nay but John Alden”—

“What is it! What’s thy news! Speak quick or I’ll sprinkle thee rather than the linen!” and raising the wooden dipper Priscilla whirled it so rapidly round her head that not a drop was spilled, while Mary shrieking and laughing darted back and crouched behind an alder bush.

“Maids! Maids! Whence this unseemly mirth! Know ye not that the laughter of fools is like the crackling of thorns under the pot, a sure sign of the fire they are hastening to? The devil goeth about like a roaring lion”—

“Sometimes methinks he seemeth more like an ass,” murmured Priscilla in Mary’s ear, setting her off into

*"I would . . . I had the training of thee
for a while"*



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convulsions of repressed laughter, while her naughty tormentor looked demurely up the bank to the angular figure defined against the evening sky and said, —

“ We are beholden to you for the admonition, Master Allerton, and it must be a marvelous comfort to you that Mary and Remember Allerton weep so much oftener than they laugh.”

“ I would, thou froward wench, that I had the training of thee for a while. Mayhap thou wouldest find cause for weeping ” —

“ Nay, I’m sure on ’t. The very thought well-nigh makes me weep now,” retorted Priscilla blithely, as the sour-visaged Councilor went on his way, and Mary half frightened, half delighted, came forward saying, —

“ Oh Priscilla, how dost thou dare flout Master Allerton in that style ! He ’ll have thee before the Church.”

“ Not he ! ” replied Priscilla coolly. “ Hist now, poppet, and I ’ll tell thee something — thou ’lt not repeat it though ? ”

“ Not I,” replied Mary stoutly.

“ Well, then, dost think I should make a fitting step-dame for Bartholomew and Mary and Remember ? ”

“ Dost mean ” —

“ Ay do I, just that. And because I could not but laugh merrily at the notion when ’t was placed before me last Sunday night, the Assistant looketh sourly enough but dareth not meddle with me lest I make others laugh as well as myself.”

“ Priscilla ! Mary ! ” called Elizabeth Tilley’s voice from the doorstep. “ Mistress Brewster would have you in to see about noon-meat.”

“ But thy news, poppet, quick ! ” exclaimed Priscilla as gathering up her gear she slowly led the way up the hill.

“Why, the governor hath resolved upon a day, or rather a week, of holiday and of thanksgiving for the mercies God hath showed us. Think of it, Pris! A whole week of feasting and holiday!”

“Hm!” dryly responded Priscilla. “It sounds well enow, but who is to make ready this feasting?”

“Why — all of us — and chiefly you, dear wench, for none can season a delicate dish or” —

“Ay, ay, I know that song full well; but dost really think, Molly, that to do a good deal more, and a good deal harder cooking than our wont, will be so very sprightly a holiday?”

“But ‘t will be doing our part to make holiday for the others,” replied Mary simply.

“Now, then, if thou ‘rt not at thy old tricks of shamming my selfish frowardness!” exclaimed Priscilla, and laughing they entered the house where all the women of the community were assembled in eager debate over their share in the approaching festival.

“The governor hath already ordered my man, with Dotey and Soule and Latham, to go afield to-morrow with their guns, and to spend two days in gathering game,” announced Helen Billington with an air of importance.

“And it was determined to invite King Massasoit and his train to the feast,” eagerly added Mistress Winslow, who, with her baby Peregrine White in her arms, had run across the street to join the council.

“Methinks another party should go to the beach to dig clams,” suggested Dame Hopkins. “For though not so toothsome as venison and birds ‘tis a prey more surely to be come by.”

“The elder saith the God of Jacob sendeth us the

clams as he did manna to those other children of his in the desert," added the weak sweet voice of the elder's wife. "At morning and at night we may gather them in certainty."

"But they hold not sweet over Sunday, that is if the day be hot," suggested Desire Minter ruefully.

"And Priscilla we shall look to thee for marchpanes and manchets and plum-porridge and possets and all manner of tasty cates, such as only thou canst make," said the dame hastily, and fixing her eyes upon the girl's face as if to hinder any irreverent laughter at Desire's speech.

"All that I can do I will do blithely and steadfastly if it will pleasure you, mother," replied Priscilla gently, as she knelt down beside the invalid and rested against the arm of that old chair which you may see to-day reverently preserved in Plymouth.

"I know thou wilt, sweetheart," replied the dame laying her frail hand upon the girl's abundant hair. "But I fear me our men cannot dine to-day on the promise of the coming feast."

"Well thought on, mother. Come maids to work, to work!"

That same afternoon Squanto was dispatched to Nasket to send from thence a runner to Massasoit inviting him, with his brother and a fitting escort, to the feast of Thanksgiving now fixed for the following Thursday; and so cordially did the great sachem respond, that about sunrise on the appointed day the laggards of the settlement were aroused by the terrific whoop and succession of unearthly shrieks with which the guests announced at once their arrival and their festive and playful condition of mind.

Three of the leaders were ready even at this hour to receive the over punctual guests: the elder, who had risen early to prepare a few brief remarks suited to the occasion; Standish, who was always afoot to fire his sunrise gun; and Bradford, who valued the quiet morning hour in which he might allow his mind to dwell upon those abstruse and profound subjects so dear to his heart, and yet never allowed to intrude upon the business of the working day. So, while Winslow with his wife's assistance did on his more festive doublet and hose, and Allerton spake bitter words to Remember who had forgotten to replace the button that should hold her father's collar in place, and gentle Warren, the gruff Surgeon, and the rest made ready as they might, these three stood forth to receive Massasoit and Quadequina, who with a dozen or so of their principal pniees came forward with considerable dignity, and through Squanto and Hobomok made their compliments in truly regal style, while their followers to the number of about ninety men with a few women remained modestly in the background.

Presently when the village was well afoot, and a big fire started between the elder's house and the brook for cooking purposes, the roll of the drum announced the morning prayers, with which the Pilgrims began every day, and more especially this Feast of Thanksgiving. The Indians stood reverently around, Massasoit explaining in low gutturals to a chieftain who had never visited Plymouth before, that the white men thus propitiated the Great Spirit, and engaged Him both to prosper them and kill their enemies.

Prayers ended, Priscilla with her attendants flew back to the fire, and presently a long table spread in

the open air for the men was covered with great wooden bowls full of what a later generation named hasty-pudding, to be eaten with butter and treacle, for milk was not to be had for more than one year to come. Other bowls contained an excellent clam chowder with plenty of sea biscuit swimming in the savory broth, while great pieces of cold boiled beef with mustard, flanked by dishes of turnips, offered solid resistance to those who so joyfully attacked them.

Another table in the Common house offered somewhat more delicate food to the women and children, chief among it a great pewter bowl of plum-porridge with bits of toasted cracker floating upon it.

The meal was a rude one looked upon with the dainty eyes and languid appetites of to-day, but to those sturdy and heroic men and women it was a veritable feast, and at its close Quadequina with an amiable smile nodded to one of his attendants, who produced and poured upon the table something like a bushel of popped corn,—a dainty hitherto unseen and unknown by most of the Pilgrims.

All tasted, and John Howland hastily gathering up a portion upon a wooden plate carried it to the Common house for the delectation of the women, that is to say, for Elizabeth Tilley, whose firm young teeth craunched it with much gusto.

Breakfast over, with a grace after meat that amounted to another service, the governor announced that some military exercises under the direction of Captain Standish would now take place, and the guests were invited to seat themselves in the vicinity of a fire kindled on the ground at the northerly part of the village about at the head of Middle Street, and designed more as a com-

mon centre and social feature than for need since the weather was mild and lovely, so peculiarly so that when it recurred the next November and the next, the people remembering that first feast said, “Why, here is the Indians’ summer again!” But on that day the only thought was that God accepted their thanksgiving and smiled His approval.

Hardly had the guests comprehended the announcement and placed themselves in order, when a wild fanfare of trumpets, an imposing roll of drums was heard from the vicinity of the Fort, and down the hill in orderly array marched the little army of nineteen men, preceded by the military band and led by their doughty Captain. Above their heads floated the banner of Old England, and beneath their corselets beat true English hearts ; and yet here stood the nucleus of that power which a century and a half later was to successfully defy and throw off the rule of that magnificent but cruel stepdame ; here stood the first American army ; and then, as since, that score of determined souls struck terror into the hearts of five times their number.

“If they have beguiled us here to destroy us!” murmured Quadequina in his brother’s ear.

“Canst not tell an eagle from a carrion-crow?” returned the wiser man. “Would Winsnow, or The-Sword, or the Chief, or the powah, do this? Peace, my brother.”

But as the military manœuvres accompanied with frequent discharges of musketry, and accented at one point with a tremendous roar from the cannon of the Fort progressed, not only Quadequina, but many other of the braves became very uneasy ; and to this cause as well as benevolence, may be attributed the offer made at dinner time by Quadequina to lead a hunting party of his

own people into the woods to look for deer, whose haunts they well knew.

Standish alone suspected this *arrière pensée*, and when Bradford mildly applauded the generous kindness of their guests, he answered with a chuckle,—

“Ay, as kind as the traveler who begs the highwayman to let him go home and fetch a larger treasure.”

But in spite of his doubts the prince intended and made a *bonâ fide* hunt, and returned early in the next day with as much venison as lasted the entire company four days.

“Oh, if I had but some Spanish chestnuts to stuff these turkeys, they might seem more like their brethren across the seas,” exclaimed Priscilla as she turned over a pile of the wild birds and chose those to be first cooked.

“Nay, but to me the flavor is better, and the meat more succulent of these than of any I ever saw at home,” replied John Alden. “And the size! Do but look at this fellow, he will scale well-nigh twenty pound if an ounce.”

“If ‘t were a goose I would name it John, ‘t would be so prodigious a goose,” replied Priscilla with a glance so saucy and so bewitching that her adorer forgot to reply, and she went briskly on,—

“Come now, young man, there’s much to do and scant time to talk of it. Call me some of those gaping boys yonder and let them pluck these fowl, and bid John Billington come and break up these deer. And I must have wood and water galore to make meat for a hundred men. Stir thyself!”

“I was thinking, Priscilla — why not stuff the turkeys with beechnuts? There is store of them up at our cottage.”

“How came they there? Doth our doughty Captain go birds-nesting and nutting in his by-times?”

“Nay, but I did, that is, I gathered the nuts for thee, and then — then feared if I offered them thou ’dst only flout me” —

“Oh, sure never was a poor maid so bestead with blind men — well, fetch thy beechnuts.”

“Nay, Priscilla, but blind, blind? How then am I blind, maiden, say?”

“Why, not to have discovered ere this how I dote upon beechnuts. There, get thee gone for them.”

The dressing of beechnuts proved a rare success, but the preparation proved so long a process that only the delicate young bird made ready for the table where Mistress Brewster presided was thus honored, although in after times Priscilla often made what she called goose-dressing; and when a few years later some sweet potatoes were brought to Plymouth from the Carolinas, she at once adopted them for the same purpose.

And so the festival went on for its appointed length of three days, and perhaps the hearty fellowship and good will manifested by the white men toward their guests, and their determination to meet them on the ground of common interests and sympathies, went quite as far as their evident superiority in arms and resources toward establishing the deep-founded and highly valued peace, without which the handful of white men could never have made good their footing upon that stern and sterile coast.

On the Saturday the feast was closed by a state dinner whose composition taxed Priscilla as head cook to the limit of her resources, and with flushed cheek and knitted brow she moved about among her willing assis-

tants with all the importance of a Bechamel, a Felix, the *maître-d'hôtel* of Cardinal Fesch with his two turbots, or luckless Vatel who fell upon his sword and died because he had no turbot at all; or even, rising in the grandeur of the comparison, we may liken her to Domitian, who, weary of persecuting Christians, one day called the Roman Senate together to decide with him upon the sauce with which another historic turbot should be dressed.

Some late arrivals among the Indians had that morning brought in several large baskets of the delicious oysters for which Wareham is still famous, and although it was an unfamiliar delicacy to her, Priscilla, remembering a tradition brought from Ostend to Leyden by some travelers, compounded these with biscuit-crumbs, spices, and wine, and was looking about for an iron pan wherein to bake them, when Elizabeth Tilley brought forward some great clam and scallop shells which John Howland had presented to her, just as now a young man might offer a unique Sèvres tea-set to the lady of his love.

"Would n't it do to fill these with thy oyster compote, and so set them in the ashes to roast?" inquired she. "Being many they can be laid at every man's place at table."

"Why, 'tis a noble idea, child," exclaimed Priscilla eagerly. "'T will be a novelty, and will set off the board famously. Say you not so, John?"

"Ay," returned Alden, who was busily opening the oysters at her side. "And more by token there is a magnificence in the idea that thou hast not thought on; for as at a great man's table the silver dishes each bear the crest of his arms, so we being Pilgrims and thus

privileged to wear the scallop shell in our hats, do rather choose to display it upon our board."

"Ah, John, thou hast an excellent wit—in *some* things," replied Priscilla with a half sigh which set the young fellow wondering for an hour.

By noon the long tables were spread, and still the sweet warm air of the "Indian Summer" made the out-of-door feast not only possible but charming, for the gauzy veil upon the distant forest, and the marine horizon, and the curves of Captain's Hill, seemed to shut in this little scene from all the world of turmoil and danger and fatigue, while the thick yellow sunshine filtered through with just warmth enough for comfort, and the sighing southerly breeze brought wafts of perfume from the forest, and bore away, as it wandered northward, the peals of laughter, the merry yet discreet songs, and the multitudinous hum of blithe voices, Saxon and savage, male and female, adult and childish, that filled the dreamy air.

The oysters in their scallop shells were a singular success, and so were the mighty venison pasties, and the savory stew compounded of all that flies the air, and all that flies the hunter in Plymouth woods, no longer flying now but swimming in a glorious broth cunningly seasoned by Priscilla's anxious hand, and thick bestead with dumplings of barley flour, light, toothsome, and satisfying. Beside these were roasts of various kinds, and thin cakes of bread or manchets, and bowls of salad set off with wreaths of autumn leaves laid around them, and great baskets of grapes, white and purple, and of the native plum, so delicious when fully ripe in its three colors of black, white, and red. With these were plentiful flagons of ale, for already the housewives had laid

"Priscilla sends you some shrub, kind sir"



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down the first brewing of the native brand, and had moreover learned of the Indians to concoct a beverage akin to what is now called root beer, well flavored with sassafras, of which the Pilgrims had been glad to find good store since it brought a great price in the English market.

It was during the last half hour of this feast that Desire Minter, who with the other girls served the tables where the men sat at meat, placed a little silver cup at Captain Standish's right hand saying,—

“Priscilla sends you some shrub, kind sir, of her own composition, and prays you drink her health.”

“Why, then, 't is kind of her who hath been most unkind of late,” returned Myles, upon whose seasoned brain the constant potations of three days had wrought to lull suspicion and reserve, and taking the cup he tossed off its contents at a draught, and rising bowed toward Priscilla who was flitting in and out among the tables. She returned the salute with a little air of surprise, and Myles reseating himself turned to question Desire again, but she had departed carrying the cup with her.

“Nay, then, I 'll be toyed with no longer,” muttered the Captain angrily, and although he bore his part in the closing ceremonies with which the governor bade a cordial and even affectionate farewell to the king, the prince, their nobles, and their following, there was a glint in his eye and a set to his lips that would have told one who knew him well that the spirit of the man was roused and not lightly to be laid to rest again.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A LOVE PHILTRE.

THE last pniese had made his uncouth obeisance and departed, and busy hands were removing all signs of the late commotion in haste that the setting sun should find the village ready for its Sunday rest and peace, when Myles Standish suddenly presented himself before Priscilla Molines as she came up from the spring with a pile of wooden trenchers in her hands.

“Mistress Molines a word with you,” began he with an unconscious imperiousness that at once aroused the girl’s rebellious spirit.

“Nay, Captain, I am not of your train band, and your business must await my pleasure and convenience. Now, I am over busy.”

“Nay, then, if I spoke amiss I crave your pardon, mistress, and had we more time I would beat my brains for some of the flowery phrases I used to hear among the court gallants who came to learn war in Flanders. But I also have business almost as weighty as thine and as little able to brook delay. So I pray you of your courtesy to set down your platters on this clean sod, and listen patiently to me for a matter of five minutes.”

“I am listening, sir.”

“Nay, put down the platters or let me put them down.”

“There then, and glad am I” —

“ Of what, mistress ? ”

“ That I’m not often under thy orders, sir.”

“ Ah ! But we’ll waste no time in skirmishing, fair enemy. Tell me rather what didst mean by the loving-cup thou sendst me ? May I take it sooth and truly as relenting on thy part ? ”

“ I send you a loving-cup, sir ! ” exclaimed the girl, her eyes flashing, and her color rising.

“ Yes. Call it by what name you will ; I mean the cup Desire Minter brought me from thee, with a message that I should drink thy health.”

“ Loth were I to think, Captain Standish, that you would willfully insult a maid with none to defend her, and so I will charitably suppose that you have been forced to drink too many healths to guard well thine own. Good e’en, sir.”

“ Now by the God that made us both, wench, I’ll have an end of this. Nay, not one step dost thou stir until you or I are laid in a lie.”

“ A lie, Captain Standish ! ”

“ Mayhap my own lie. I say that Desire Minter brought me a silver cup of some sweet posset, such as you have made for our sick folk time and again, and bade me from you quaff it to your health.”

“ And that is God’s truth, say you, sir ? ”

“ Mistress Molines, my word has not often been doubted, and you force me to remind you that I come not of mechanical ” —

“ Nay, nay, stop there, an’ it please you, sir ! We’ll unwind this coil before we snarl another. Fear not that my base mechanical blood shall ever sully your noble strain ; but mean though I be, my habit is a tolerably truthful one, and I tell you once and for all that

I sent you no cup, I made you no posset, I desired no health drunk by you."

"Nay, then, what hath this girl Desire wrought? And truth to tell Priscilla, I fear me 'tis poison, for a shrewd pain seizeth me ever and anon, and a strange heaviness is in my head."

"And there's a sultry color on your cheek—nay, then, we'll see the surgeon"—

"And thou 'lt forgive whatever I have said amiss, Priscilla, for mayhap I'll trouble thee no more. Like enough she hath revenged herself"—

"For your scorn of her love," interposed Priscilla vivaciously. "Like enough, like enough. Come to the house, Captain, and let us take counsel with the dear mother. She still knows best."

"Go thou, Priscilla. It hardly beseems a man and a soldier to seek redress for a wench's love scratch at the hands of an old woman—nay, nay, fire not up afresh! No one can honor Mistress Brewster more than I do, but tell me, is she a man or is she young? Sooth now, Priscilla!"

"And still in thy masterful mood thou 'lt have the last word, doughty Captain. But go you home, then, and bid John Alden make a fire and heat a good kettle of water, and I'll away to the mother who will deal with Desire in short measure."

"'T is good counsel and I'll follow it, for in sober sadness I feel strangely amiss." And the soldier, who now was as livid as he had been flushed, strode away up the hill, while Priscilla picking up the trenchers fled like a lapwing into the house where she found Desire seated sullenly in a corner, while the elder, his wife, and the governor were gathered together near the fire cozily

discussing the events of the day. Standing before them and restraining her natural vivacity that it might not discredit the importance of her story, Priscilla in brief and pungent phrases told the story of the loving draught, and as Desire rose and stole toward the door laid a hand upon her arm that effectually detained her until the elder sternly said, —

“ Remain you here, Desire Minter, until this report is sifted.”

“ Were it not well to send at once for our good physician, that he may know what hath been done before he sees the captain ? ” suggested Bradford mildly, and the elder assenting, Priscilla was dispatched for doctor Fuller, who arrived within the minute, and listened with profound attention, while Mistress Brewster, to whom alone the girl would reply, extracted from her a most startling story.

“ The captain first of all asked me to wife, and if he had not been wiled away from me by artful ” —

“ Nay, nay, Desire, thou ’rt not to say such things as that,” interposed the dame with gentle severity, and Bradford added in much the same tone, —

“ T was thine own idle fancy, girl, that set thee on such a notion. The captain hath averred to me as Christian man that he never made proffer to thee nor wished so to do since first he set eyes on thee.”

“ He did then,” muttered Desire sullenly, and Mistress Brewster interposed.

“ Leaving that aside, tell us, Desire, what didst thou give the captain to drink, and why didst say that Priscilla sent it ? ”

“ Marry, because she hath bewitched him, and I wot well he would take it from her without gainsaying.”

“But what was it thou gavest him?”

“T was — there was a wench here with the savages, and Squanto told me she was a wise woman and knew how to work spells” —

“Well then, go on, Desire.”

“And so I went with her pulling herbs in the fields and swamps, and with one word English and one of jabber, we knew each other’s meaning, and I gave her the buckle of my belt which was broke and none here could mend it.”

“A generous gift, truly,” interposed the elder, but his wife beseeching silence with a gesture asked, —

“And what gave she thee, Desire?”

“Some herbs, mother.”

“And what were the herbs to do?”

“She said steep them well, and give the broth to any man I fancied, and it would turn his fancy on me.”

“A love philtre! *Vade retrograde Sathanas!*” exclaimed the elder half rising from his chair, but here the doctor eagerly interposed, —

“What like was the herb, girl? Hast any of it in store for a second dose?”

“Mayhap — a little,” muttered Desire twisting and turning, but seeing no means of escape.

“Go and fetch it,” commanded the elder. “And Priscilla do thou go too and see that the wretched creature doth not make way with it.”

“And sith John Howland is after a sort betrothed to the poor bemused child, I think it well to summon him, that he may advise with us as to the sequela of this folly. I will call him to the Council.” And Bradford followed the two girls from the room.

“If she hath murdered the captain, she shall die the

death," exclaimed the elder striding about the room, and pausing before the great chair where his pale and fragile wife sat looking up at him with beseeching eyes.

"Nay, William, she is hardly older than our own dear girls, and it would ill become us who still carry our own lives in our hands to deprive a poor silly maid of hers."

"So the best road out of the maze is to cure the captain," remarked Doctor Fuller dryly. "After that we 'll marry the girl to John Howland, and trust him to keep her quiet. Here they come."

And in at the open door came the governor and Howland, Desire and Priscilla, who carried in her hand a little box full of half-dried leaves, which she presented to the doctor, who solemnly pulling from his pocket a pair of clumsy iron-bowed spectacles put them astride his nose, and taking the herbs to the window carefully examined them, while all the rest stood anxiously around staring with all their might.

"Hm! Hah! Yes, well yes, I see, I see!" murmured the botanist, and then turning to Bradford he fixed him with a meditative gaze over the tops of his barnacles and said,—

"You know something of botany, Governor. Say you not that this is the *Platanthera Satyrion*, the herb supposed to give vigor to the hearts of those wild men whom the mythologists celebrate?"

"Is it? I should have taken it for the iris whose flower I have noted in these swamps."

"'T is akin, ay, distant kin, but with the difference that maketh one harmless, and 't other deadly. I will take it to Sister Winslow's house and examine it with my books, but still I can aver at once that 't is *Platanthera*; and if it is also *Satyrion* I will promise that it

shall prove only nauseous and distasteful to our good Captain, and by no means deadly. I will go to see him."

"And John Howland," said the Governor turning toward the young man who stood looking with aversion at the figure of Desire, who with her head in her apron wept loud and angrily, "it seemeth to me that since this maid is betrothed to you, and is manifestly unfit to guide herself, that it is best for you to marry her here, and now, and after that train her into more discretion than she naturally showeth."

"May it please you, Master Bradford, and you, Elder," replied Howland coldly, "it seemeth to me that a woman who shows so little modesty in the pursuit of one man is scarce fit wife for another. I did indeed promise my late dear mistress whose ward this girl was, that I would care for her, and if need be take her to wife; but sure am I that if that godly and discreet matron could know of all this, she would hold me free of my bonds, the rather that I have never looked upon her with that tenderness that God putteth in our hearts toward those" —

"Nay, then, if it comes to that," interposed Desire, snatching away her apron and showing a swollen and tear-stained face, "I hate and despise thee, John Howland, and always have and always will; and if I took thee for my bachelor at all it was only in hope that 't would give a jealous twinge to the heart of a better man, and if at the last I failed of him thou wouldst be better than none; but I 've changed my mind, and now I 'll none of thee, not if ne'er another man" —

"Peace, shameless wench!" thundered the elder, striking the table with his hand. "Profane not the

ears of a decent matron with such talk. John Howland, it is my rede that thou art free of thy pledge to marry this woman. What say you, Governor?"

"I agree with you, Elder Brewster, that since both man and maid desire to render back their troth that they should be permitted so to do; and I further suggest that by the first occasion presenting, Desire Minter be sent back to her friends in England, who will, as Mistress Carver told me, be content to receive her."

"Amen!" ejaculated John Howland with such unction that Bradford gravely smiled as he followed him from the room, and murmured under his breath,—"He will wed Elizabeth Tilley, an' I 'm not mistaken."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PHILIP DE LA NOYE.

“ ‘T IS a year agone to-day since we in the *Mayflower* sighted land in this place,” said Bradford to Standish, as the two stood beside the gun just fired for sunset when all obligatory labor ended in the village.

“ Ay, is it so? Well, it hath been a year of note in more ways than one, and the next is like to be as adventurous. Ha! Look you there, Bradford! Dost see that Indian runner breasting the hill. Some great news, surely, — come, let us go to meet him.”

“ Squanto is before us. See him leap the brook” —

But Standish was already half way down the hill, and presently in the open space already spoken of as the Town Square he and two or three of the other leaders met the runner, who escorted by Squanto came panting up the hill from the brook, and after the usual salutations informed the governor that he was sent from Aspinet, sachem of the Nausets, to inform the white men that a vessel had been watched feeling her way through the shoals around Cape Cod, and was now laying her course apparently for Plymouth. Not knowing whether this might be good or bad news, the sachem had felt it a friendly act to convey it to his new allies with the greatest possible dispatch.

“ And he did well, and both he and thou shall see that we are not ungrateful,” replied Bradford cour-

teously. "Tisquantum, take this man to the Common house, and see that he is suitably refreshed. And now, brethren, what meaneth this? Is it indeed good news or bad?"

"Bad," replied Standish promptly. "For well do we know that no relief was to be sent us until our friends the traders had seen the first fruits of their Adventure, and as we perforce sent home the Mayflower empty, I for one expect to hear no more from Cheapside unless it be a rating."

"There hath not been time for the Mayflower to go and return, were our friends never so willing to aid us," suggested the elder pacifically.

"Then what think you, men?" persisted Bradford. "Allerton, Winslow, Warren, what say ye all?"

"We know that the French are at war with England," suggested Winslow. "And this may be a privateer coming to harry the settlement."

"In that case it were well to hide whatever we have of value and retreat to the woods with the women and children," said Allerton turning pale.

"And leave our houses, and the Fort and its armament, and our boats!" exclaimed Standish contemptuously. "Nay, Governor, my counsel is that we at once arm ourselves, train what guns we can upon the offing, and if these indeed be buccaneers, French, Spanish, or Turks, receive them with a volley that shall leave little work for a second one. The women and children may retreat to the woods, and he who has any pots, or cups, or pans of value may bury them an' he chooses. My best treasures are Gideon and my snaphance, and I cannot spare them so long as I live to wield them."

"That's the chat that suits me, neighbor," declared

Hopkins in his usual rough, hearty fashion, while Allerton, an unwonted tinge of color upon his sallow cheek, hastened to avow himself as ready for fighting as any man since fighting was decided to be the best policy.

And now Standish assumed control of the occasion and showed himself in his most becoming attitude. His quick eyes and ready hands were everywhere, and the somewhat sharp and terse military orders that sometimes had seemed a thought arbitrary now carried assurance in their tone, and strengthened the hearts of some and supported the determination of others, who left to themselves would have scattered like sheep without a leader.

“Let each man arm and harness himself and report for inspection in the Town Square,” was the first order, and while it was obeyed the Captain climbed the hill carrying the “perspective glass” made by Galileo himself during his exile in Holland, and brought to the new world by Governor Carver, whose widow bequeathed it to the colony as one of its chief treasures.

He was followed by William Trevor, one of the seamen hired by the colony for a year, a fellow of quick eyesight and undaunted courage. The Captain silently and carefully adjusted his lenses, and then handed the glass to Trevor.

“Now you, Bill, clap your eye to that and get it on yon headland, Farther Manomet, d’ ye see?”

“Ay, Captain, I have it, and can count the squirrels on the tree tops.”

“Canst tell a ship’s topmast from a squirrel if one should heave in sight?”

“Mayhap I could, master.”

“Well, then, watch for it, and so soon as any craft of

any color, be it one of your squirrels on a chip, an Indian in a canoe, or a French man-of-war, send this boy Cooke tumbling down the hill to bring the news. Now, man, show thy discretion and thy wit."

"Ay, ay, Captain, you may trust Bill Trevor for a keen lookout. When I sailed aboard a whaler" —

But already the Captain was out of hearing, and presently was inspecting his little army, mustered in the Town Square, each man armed and armored.

Drawn up in two ranks the twenty men presented a striking array, for in the forefront stood the governor, the elder, the surgeon, Winslow, Allerton, Warren, Hopkins, Howland, Alden, and Peter Browne, ancestor of John Brown of Ossawatomie; while the file closers, if not men of equal note in affairs, were each one a sturdy and determined Englishman, ready to fight till the death and never guess that he could be conquered.

The inspection over, the train band was dismissed with orders to stand ready to reassemble at a moment's warning, and meantime to make such dispositions of private property as seemed good to each man.

Hardly was this order obeyed when from the Fort came Trevor's sonorous hail, —

"Sail ho!" and presently young Cooke came pelting down the hill reporting with a military salute to the captain.

"Trevor saith, sir, that a ship of not over sixty ton is drawing around Manomet, and that she flieth no colors as yet."

"Ha! Let us see then, let us see!" cried the captain, and two minutes later was at the top of the hill, glass in hand.

"Hm! Square rigged, slender built — what say you, Trevor, is she a Frenchman?"

“More like a Dutchman to my mind, sir.”

“Ah, then were we all right, and with a goodly new store of schnapps to comfort our souls, but my mind misdoubts me. Now let us see if we can train this saker to command the offing. Boy, run down the hill and fetch Billington and Master Hopkins. ‘T will do no harm, and may — ay, this minion will sweep the Rock like a new broom. Here, Billington, come on man and lend me thy bull’s neck and shoulders. I would shift the carriage of this saker. Ho, Hopkins, give us a little help here. There yeo-ho, men! Again, now then — yeo-ho! Now we have it, now! There, settle her in place, that’s it, there! Now then, Trevor, how about the Frenchman?”

“She is laying her course for this harbor, Captain. You may see her without the glass well enow, for she’s going about to fetch Beach Point.”

“Is tide high enow to carry her over Brown’s Islands, as Champlain calleth the outer flats?” asked Hopkins, who by fits liked to appear erudite.

“Ay, ‘t is full water at noon to-day,” replied Trevor, his eye glued to the glass.

“Now then, now then, here she is making straight into the harbor,” exclaimed Standish excitedly, and plunging down the hill followed by the rest, he made signal to Bart Allerton standing expectant at his own door to sound the “assembly” upon the trumpet which he had learned to manage with great precision.

Ten minutes later the whole array of fighting men stood steady in their ranks, with the larger boys hanging in the rear, each carrying a spare gun, or some other weapon, and all eyes fixed upon the point where the stranger would appear as she beat her way into the harbor.

Suddenly the captain waved his hand above his head, glancing up at the Fort where, under the folds of the British standard, stood Trevor, linstock in hand. Another moment, and out from the hoarse throat of the saker roared a defiant peal echoing grandly from hill to hill, startling the savages who covertly watched the arrival of new foes or new friends as the case might be, and rolling ominously across the waters of the harbor to demand the name of the intruder.

“They be busy with their ancient-staff,” reported Trevor presently, as he resumed the spy-glass. “There goes the bunting — ha — ay — run boy, and tell the captain ‘tis the red cross of Merrie England ; ‘t is the home colors, boy !”

But already the eager eyes in the Town Square had recognized the flag, and Standish lapsing from the martinet into the exile waved Gideon above his head shouting, —

“T is our own flag, men ; ‘t is the red cross of Old England ! Three cheers boys, three cheers for the dear old flag ! Now then !”

And the glad shout arose, and again and again, not only from the bearded throats of men, but in the shrill treble of boys, and the dainty voices of girls, who just out of sight watched as women do, when life and honor hang in the balance.

“Oh Mary, Mary maid, why art thou crying ! Silly wench ” —

“Nay, but thou ‘rt crying thyself, Priscilla ! Nay, now thou ‘rt laughing !”

“To think how John Alden turned white as any maid when the good news came !” sobbed Priscilla running in to fling her arms around Dame Brewster, who

sat with folded hands and rapt face praying to the God of battles.

“Oh mother, mother, they all are safe, and ‘t is an English ship. Belike, Fear and Patience and their brother are aboard.”

“Nay, dear maid, nay, be not so carried away. If indeed God sendeth my children”—

But the mere thought of such joy was too much for the self-control the poor mother so struggled for, and when the elder hastened into the house he found his wife weeping for joy upon Priscilla’s heaving breast.

“Nay then, wife, nay then, doest thou well?—and yet mine own eyes might but too easily rain with gratitude. Dame, wife I say, nay then—let us pray that in all things His will be done.”

And in less than an hour Mary Brewster was sobbing afresh in the stalwart embrace of her eldest son Jonathan, a young fellow of five-and-thirty, who full of health and courage was come to be the staff of her old age, and to bring news of the fair sisters who would come anon.

For this was the Fortune, a little ship of fifty-five tons, dispatched by the Adventurers in London to carry over some of the colonists disappointed of a passage in the Mayflower, but principally to convey Robert Cushman, who came pledged to obtain the consent of the Pilgrims to a contract more favorable to their English friends than that they were disposed to undertake. With him came his son Thomas, a boy of fourteen, whom his father upon his hasty return in the Fortune left behind under charge of the governor, to whom he subsequently wrote, “I pray you care for my son as for your own;” and so well did Bradford train the boy soon orphaned and

left entirely to his charge, that Thomas Cushman became successor of William Brewster as Ruling Elder of the Pilgrim Church, and now lies on Burying Hill beneath a goodly monument erected by his numerous descendants.

But little on that bleak November day recked the boy of future honors or proud posterities, for he and his friend Thomas Prence, future governor of the colony, but then a merry youth of nineteen, were hand and glove with a gay company of lads and young men who had accepted the adventure of Pilgrimage as they would have sailed with Drake, or Hawkins, or Captain Cooke, —any leader who promised novelty, excitement, and the chance of hard knocks and treasure.

So little responsible for their own welfare were many of these younkers that, although fairly fitted out for the voyage, they had while weather-bound in the British Channel gone ashore at Old Plymouth and “brushed away” even their cloaks and extra doublets, in some cases their very bedding and such cooking utensils as passengers were then expected to provide themselves with. So far from bringing fresh supplies of food to the colony, these runagates had devoured perforce the provisions that should have victualed the Fortune on her return voyage, and the colonists were forced for humanity’s sake to supply her out of their own scanty stock.

Among these young fellows was a slight, dark-eyed lad of about nineteen, who so soon as he had landed asked for the Demoiselle Molines.

“Priscilla Molines? Dost thou know her then?” inquired Alden who heard the question, although addressed to Billington, who only grinned at the lad’s French accent and made no reply.

“Certainly, yes. My sister is of her closest friends.”

“Ay? Is thy name De la Noye?”

“Truly!” exclaimed the boy, his face lighting vivaciously. “I am Philip de la Noye.”

“Hm, and your brother Jacques—is he in the company, or coming in the next ship?” asked Alden grimly; but at that moment Priscilla coming swiftly forward, held out both hands to the new-comer exclaiming joyously in French, —

“Philip, dear lad! Glad am I to see thee”

“She will have news now from her lover,” muttered Alden bitterly, but just then the captain hailed, —

“Here Jack, put thy long legs and brawny thews to service in bringing some of these budgets up the hill. Here’s a poor soul with three little children tugging at her skirts and she a widow, and fit to be put to bed herself.”

“I’ll help her up the hill, Captain,” interposed Peter Browne hastily, and as he carefully aided the Widow Ford to climb the steep ascent some sprite might have whispered in his ear that this was his own future wife. That night was born Martha Ford, who should from similarity of history have married Peregrine White, but who instead wedded William Nelson.

Not until the last bale or packet unloaded from the Fortune had been disposed of in the Common storehouse, or in some one of the houses all hospitably thrown open to the new-comers, did John Alden cease his labors or exchange more than a brief word with those about him, until at last Bradford cheerily declared labor over for the day and added, —

“Come friends to my house, and hear what Master Cushman will have to tell us of affairs in the old home.

Come Alden, and reward thy labors with a good flagon of beer."

Muttering some reply, the young man followed the rest up Leyden Street, but as they reached the governor's house, a somewhat larger and more important cabin than the rest, he passed quickly on and up the hill. Pausing but a moment at the Fort, he struck down the steep southerly side to the brook, and having performed his simple toilet strode moodily on toward the forest, but had only gone a few rods when a familiar voice called his name, and turning he saw Priscilla with Mary Chilton and the young Frenchman, to whom they seemed to be showing the brook and its springs of "delicate water."

Very reluctantly Alden turned and moved toward them.

"Did you speak, Mistress Mary?" inquired he as the party approached.

"I—I," stammered Mary blushing vividly.

"It was I who bade her do so," interposed Priscilla with an impatient glance at the English girl whose honesty had spoiled her little finesse. "We thought you looked but dull, and I would fain bring my new-arrived friend Philip De la Noye to your acquaintance."

The two men exchanged salutations, Philip with the ready grace of a Latin, John with that distinguishing a Saxon, especially if displeased.

"We are strolling about a bit before making ready for supper," added Priscilla. "Philip is curious as to our manner of life in these wilds."

"T is but ill suited to slender folk," replied Alden glancing superciliously at the slight stripling, who, for his part, surveyed with a sort of amused wonder the thews and stature of the young giant striding sullenly at Priscilla's other hand.

“ Nay, we do not pack diamonds in bales like hay,” retorted Priscilla stingingly, and then turning to Philip she inquired eagerly,—

“ And Jacques and Guillaume are well, quite, quite well, are they ?”

“ Yes, and Marie and Jeanne,” replied Philip placidly.

“ And have you news from friends at home, Mary ?” asked John decidedly moving to her side.

“ Nay, there are none left there of my nearest kin,” replied the girl sadly. “ We came all of us together, and only I am left.”

“ Nay, Mary, so fair and so good a maid as thou, will never stay long without friends. Thou wouldest never flout an honest fellow’s love and draw him on, and turn him back, and use him worse than a baby doth its puppet. The man who loves thee will never rue it.”

So meaning were his glances and his tone, that for a moment the simple maid stood aghast. Could it be that Alden’s constancy had given out, and he was now ready to woo her instead of her friend; but in another moment the truth dawned upon her, and with more diplomacy than she often showed Mary smiled and shook her head.

“ I know not, for love and sweethearts have not come my way yet. ’T is Priscilla whom all men seek, and she in merry mood listeth to all and still keepeth her own mind secret. She is well content to-night, for this lad hath brought news of his brother’s marriage.”

“ What, the fellow they call Jacques ?” demanded John glancing eagerly toward the other couple now walking some paces in advance.

“ Ay, and Guillaume is betrothed, and Jeanne. They are dear friends of our Priscilla.”

“But — but — nay, then, maid Mary, have compassion on a poor stupid oaf who is no match for her or you or any woman in subtlety and fence, and yet loveth yon maid as it is not well for man to love aught but his Maker. Tell me, doth she care aught for me ?”

“Nay, John, that is a question none but she should answer, but yet I may tell thee thus much. The news she hath to-day may embolden thee to ask again.”

“Good wench, true friend !” exclaimed Alden, his whole face lighting with a new hope. “And now as we turn toward home, if thou wouldest but engage yon boy’s attention, and let me essay while hope is strong and courage fresh, I will put my fate once more to the touch and know if joy and I are henceforth partners, or the coldest of strangers.”

“Ah, lad, thou lovest her overmuch,” replied Mary, letting her placid blue eyes rest upon him half curiously, half enviously. “No man will ever care for me like that, for I have not the skill to hide my mind as Priscilla hath. But I’ll help thee, John, for I do believe thou ’lt make the dear maid happy if she will but stay in one mind long enough to wed thee.”

And in a few moments when the setting sun warned Priscilla that it was time to turn homeward, and the two parties came together, Mary showed Philip De la Noye the strawberry plants of which he had asked, and so detained him for a moment, while John walking on with Priscilla impatiently began,—

“Wilt answer me one little question in good faith, mistress ?”

“In good faith if at all, John.”

“Then, what bond is there betwixt thee and this lad’s brother Jacques ?”

“None save good will and old acquaintance.”

“But there was.”

“Was there ?”

“Nay now, Priscilla, I speak to thee in sober sadness, and I ask such reply as honest maid should give to honest man who woos her for his wife. If we fall to quips and cranks and wordy play, thou ’rt so far out of my reach that I know not if I ever come near thee, for I ’m but a plain simple fellow, Priscilla, and I love thee more than I love aught else but God and the truth. Give me now a plain answer and have pity of my misery. Has aught of this lad’s news changed thy will or thy intent toward me ?”

And Priscilla moving slowly along beside her wooer shot a rapid sidelong glance at his white face, and for the first time in their acquaintance felt a thrill of respect akin to fear, sweep in his direction across her gay self-assertive nature.

“Yes, John, I will answer thee truly and soberly,” replied she in a voice he had never heard from her before. “Philip De la Noye hath brought news that sets me free from a teasing obligation of which no man knows. Marie and Jeanne, his sisters, are my dear friends and gossips, and their brother Jacques would fain have been my bachelor in Leyden, but I was too young my father said to listen to such talk, and he cared not greatly for Jacques, who was to tell truth somewhat gay and debonair of temper, and no church member, no, not he. So when we parted from Leyden to come hither, and I went to bid good-by to my friends, James, as you call him in English, would fain have me promise to wed no man but him, and he would come hither so soon as he was his own master.”

“And didst promise, Priscilla ?”

“Well, nay and yea, John. I said I knew not what might meet me here, and—but at long and at last I promised to wait until the first ship had followed us, and if Jacques came in her I would—would listen to him again.”

“And that was all thy promise, maiden ?”

“Ay, and enough, for before we landed on yonder Rock, and ’t was Mary Chilton and not thee, John, who first skipt ashore”—

“Oh, mind not that just now, Priscilla.”

“Well, before I myself came ashore I knew that I cared not for Jacques De la Noye. Beside the death-bed of my mother, and again by that of my brother, I knew that life was darker and deeper than he could fathom.”

“Ay, maid, and nobly didst thou bear that sorry load of woe and care.”

Priscilla’s color rose, and her dark eyes flashed a message of thanks, but without other reply she went steadily on,—

“And so soon as Philip saw me, he delivered himself of the news that Jacques, some three months since, was wed at Saint Peter’s Church to Gertrude Bartholmei, a merry Flemish maid, who ever looked kindly on him, and now is welcome to him.”

“Say you that honestly, Priscilla ?”

“As honestly as thyself could speak, lad.”

“And thou ’rt heart-whole ?”

“Nay, I said not exactly that.”

“What ! Dost really care for the captain ?”

“As I care for the governor and the doctor; no more, no less.”

“Priscilla, wilt be my wife ?”

“Nay then, John, why didst not ask that at first rather than at last? Thou ’rt too fond of quip and quirk and wordy warfare, John, too much given to fence and intrigue.”

“I, Priscilla! Nay then, I ’ll not be turned aside again, try as thou wilt. Priscilla, wilt be my wife ?”

“Nay then, I never could bear a cuckoo song all on two notes, and if thou ’rt bound to say that phrase over and over till ’t is answered”—

“ ’T is just what I am bound to do. Priscilla, wilt be my wife ?”

“Yes, John, I will, and now I hope thou ’rt content.”

“Wait till I see thee alone this evening, and I ’ll tell thee how content. Oh, maiden”—

“I will wait in what patience I may until that threatened evening hour,” interrupted Priscilla as restively as the young colt who, after long coquetting, at last feels the bridle slipped over his head. “Mary, an’ thou hasten not there ’ll be little done toward supper at supper time. Desire is naught and less than naught now that she ’s going home, and Bessy Tilley thinketh only of John Howland, and the dear mother hath her son, so who is left but thee and me to do a hand’s turn.”

“Here am I, Priscilla, and I ’ll help thee in any way thou ’lt say,” suggested John Alden a little presuming upon his recent acceptance, and for his pains receiving a snub that made him wince again, for Priscilla coldly replied,—

“They say they came nigh bringing a Jack in the Fortune, but had no room for him; so thou mayst take his place, and fetch me a bucket of water from the spring. There ’s no mighty difference betwixt Jack and John.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

KEEPING CHRISTMAS.

AND now began a new epoch in the life of the colony. The passengers of the Fortune, thirty-five in number, although nominally of the same belief and manners as the Mayflower Pilgrims, were in effect a new element which, in spite of the generous efforts of the new-comers, did not readily assimilate with the sober and restrained tone natural to men who had suffered and struggled and conquered at such terrible loss to themselves, as had the first comers.

A score of gay young fellows upon whom life sat so lightly that they cared not how they periled it, was no doubt a valuable acquisition to the fighting force of the colony, and almost upon the day of their arrival the Captain enrolled, divided, and began to train them, forming four companies of twelve men each, for some of the larger boys of the Mayflower were now enlisted, and this force of fifty men was at least once in every week led over to the Training Green across the brook, and there inspected, manœuvred, marched and counter-marched, disciplined in prompt obedience and rapid movement; until the birds of the air who watched from the neighboring forest should have carried a warning to their co-aborigines, the Narragansetts, the Neponsets, the Namaskets, and the Manomets, not yet convinced, spite of the late warning, that the white man was their Fate against which it was but bitter defeat to struggle.

The training over, each company in turn escorted the captain to his own quarters, and fired a salute of honor as he dismissed them.

“ ‘T is not for mine own glory, Will, as thou who knowest me will believe,’ said Standish, while the governor and he smoking a placid pipe on the evening of the first training, discussed the events of the day. “ But in matters military even more than civil, it needs that one man should be at the head, and command the respectful observance as well as the obedience of those under his command. It is not Myles Standish whom the soldiers of Plymouth salute as he enters this poor hut, but the Captain of the Colony’s forces.”

“ Ay, ay, Myles, I know thy humility,” replied Bradford with his smile of gentle subtlety. The captain shot an inquiring glance out of his red-brown eyes, and in turn laughed a little uncomfortably.

“ Nay now, thou ’rt laughing at me, Will. I claim no great meed of humility to be sure, and yet thou knowest lad, that if I could serve this emprise better by carrying a musket in the ranks ” —

“ Nay now, old friend, may not I smile at some jest between myself and my pipe, but thou must tack more meaning to it than Brewster says hung on Lord Burleigh’s nod? And yet in sober sadness, Myles, ’t is marvel to me how thou, born to a great name and to such observance as awaits the children of wealthy houses, and then, when hardly more than a boy, placed in authority such as appertaineth to an English army officer in time of war, how thou hast failed to become more arrogant and peremptory than thou art. And as for a musket in the ranks, what were that to such offices as not yet a year agone I saw thee fill around the beds of

the sick and dying in our first great plague? When had we a tenderer nurse, a more patient watcher? What office was too loathly for thee, what tendence too tiring?" —

"Will, an' thou holdst not thy tongue I'll leave thee to thyself."

"Thou 'lt never be so rude in thine own house, Myles. Such manners would ill befit a Standish of Standish."

"Come now, Governor, do you disapprove of the salute, or of any other of my military ordonnances?"

"I disapprove of naught, old comrade, but of a certain want of patience beneath a friend's jest which I have sometimes marked, and haply it is I who am at fault to try thee so; but Myles, there 's enow to make the governor of this colony sorry and sober, and thou shouldst not grudge him a moment of merriment even at thine own cost."

"Nor do I, as well thou knowest, Will. 'T is only that I am as ever a hot-headed fool and ill deserve a friend like thee. And now what thinkst thou of Master Cushman's errand, and the chidings of those London traders that we sent them not a cargo by the *Mayflower*? We who had much ado to dig the graves of half our company and to find food for the rest, to be rated like laggard servants because we laded not that old hulk with merchandise for their benefit."

"Ay, Master Weston's letter was somewhat hard to bear, albeit we should excuse much to his ignorance of our surroundings," said Bradford placably, although the color rose to his cheek at thought of the injustice he and his friends had suffered. "I have writ a reply," continued he, laying down his pipe and drawing a roll of paper from the pocket of his leathern jerkin, "and

am fain to have your mind upon it, for I would not be over bitter, and yet was shrewdly wounded that John Carver lying in his honored grave should be so rudely attacked. Shall I read it?"

"Ay, an' thou wilt, though I'm more than half in mind to take passage by the Fortune, and give Master Weston and the rest a reply after mine own fashion."

"What, and leave the train band to its own destruction! But here you have my poor script:—

"To the worshipful Master Thos: Weston:

"Sir,— Your large letter written to Mr. Carver and dated the 16th of July 1621 I have received the 20th of Nov'br, wherein you lay many heavy imputations upon him and us all. Touching him he is departed this life, and now is at rest in the Lord from all those troubles and incumbrances with which we are yet to strive. He needs not my apology; for his care and pains were so great for the common good both ours and yours, as that therewith it is thought, he oppressed himself and shortened his days of whose loss we cannot sufficiently complain. At great charges in this Adventure I confess you have been, and many losses you may sustain; but the loss of his and many other honest and industrious mens lives cannot be valued at any price. Of the one there may be hope of recovery, but the other no recompence can make good."

"Oh, you 're too mild, Bradford," burst out the captain as the reader paused and looked up for approval. "You should bombard him with red-hot shot, hurl a flight of grape, a volley of canister into his midst — nay then, but I 'll go myself and with a blow of my gauntlet across Master Weston's ears" —

“Here you have my poor script”



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“Captain — Captain Standish ! Master Warren hath sent me to warn your worship that some of the new-comers are building a bonfire in the Town Square, and sprinkling the pile with powder” —

“There, Myles, thou seest how well we can spare thee ! Wouldst leave me at the mercy of these rough companions who” —

But already the captain armed with a stout stick was half way down the hill, and, smiling quaintly to himself Bradford relighted his pipe and went home to finish his letter.

A week later the Fortune sailed on her return voyage carrying Cushman, who left his son Thomas under Bradford’s care until he should come again, not knowing that his next voyage should be across the shoreless sea whence no bark hath yet returned. Under his charge traveled Desire Minter, loudly proclaiming her joy at returning to regions “where a body might at least look for decent victual,” and Humility Cooper, Elizabeth Tilley’s little cousin. The two seamen, Trevor and Ely, also returned, their year of service having expired ; but in spite of the dearth of provision, already imminent owing to the unprovided condition of the new-comers, not one of the Pilgrims embraced this opportunity of escape.

Besides her passengers, the Fortune carried valuable freight consigned to Weston as agent of the Adventurers. The best room was given to sassafras root, of which the colonists had gathered great store, and with much rejoicing, for being just then the panacea of both French and English physicians, it was worth something like forty dollars of our present money per pound. Besides the sassafras were several hogsheads of beaver skins, also very valuable at that time, and the rest of the hold

was filled with clapboards and other finished lumber, the whole cargo worth at least twenty-five hundred dollars. The most precious thing on board that little vessel however, if we except human life, was a manuscript journal written by William Bradford and Edward Winslow, and sent home to their friend George Morton in London, who, finding it too good to be kept to himself, had it printed the very same year by "John Bellamy at his shop at the Two Greyhounds, near the Royal Exchange, London," and as he did not give the names of its authors, nor bestow any distinctive title upon it, it came to be called "Mourt's Relation," and was the first book ever printed about that insignificant knot of emigrants in whom we now glory as the Forefathers of New England. But alas for human hopes, alas for the honest rejoicings of the Pilgrims in their goodly cargo, just before the Fortune sighted the English coast she was captured by a French cruiser and carried into Isle Dieu. Two weeks later the vessel, crew, and passengers were released, but the sassafras, the beaver skins, and the lumber went to heal and warm and house Frenchmen instead of Englishmen, and Thomas Weston's pockets still cried out with their emptiness. Happily for the world, however, the Frenchmen did not appreciate the "Relation," and it went peacefully on in Robert Cushman's mails, and reached good George Morton's hands.

About a week after the sailing of the Fortune came Christmas Day, and Bradford doing on his clothing for a good day at lumbering allowed himself a half regretful memory of the sports and revelings with which he and the other youth of Austerfield had been wont to observe the Feast; but presently remembering his new

beliefs, the Separatist leader murmured something about "rags of Popery," and went down to his breakfast.

"Call the men together, Howland," ordered he in some displeasure as leaving his house axe in hand he found only his older comrades awaiting him. "Where are the new-comers? I see none of them."

"An' it please you, Governor, Hicks and the rest of them say it goeth against their conscience to work on Christmas Day," reported Howland with a grim smile.

For a moment Bradford frowned, but as he caught the gay glint of Standish's eyes his own softened, and after a brief pause he answered temperately, —

"We will force no man's conscience. Tell Robert Hicks and the rest that I excuse them until they be better informed."

At noon the wood-choppers returned to the village weary and hungry, for already had the entire company been placed upon half rations of food, so to continue until another cargo should arrive, or the next year's crop be ripe. Well for their endurance that they could not foresee that no farther cargo of provisions should ever arrive for them, from those who had undertaken to support them, and that the next year's crop should prove a failure. But now as they wearily toiled up the hill from the brookside, eager for the hour of rest and the scanty meal they were learning to value so highly, sounds of loud revelry and boisterous mirth fell upon their ears, sounds alien to their mood, their necessities, and on this day to their principles.

"Those runagates are holding Christmas revels in spite of you, Governor," remarked Standish half jeeringly; while Hopkins, whose humor just now was not far removed from mutiny, muttered that if godless

men were to play, he saw not why good Christians should be forced to work, call it Christmas Day or any other.

“ You are right, Hopkins, although somewhat discourteous in your rectitude,” replied Bradford, and hastening forward he came in sight of the Town Square, where some fifteen or twenty of the Fortune passengers were amusing themselves at “ stool-ball,” a kind of cricket, at pitching the bar, wrestling, hopping-matches, and various other old English sports, many of which had been encouraged and even led by the governor in the late week of Thanksgiving. But now advancing into the midst, his air of serene authority as much as his uplifted hand imposing silence upon the merry rebels, who dropped their various implements, and tried in vain to appear at ease, Bradford looking from one to another quietly said, —

“ I told you this morning that if you made the keeping of Christmas Day matter of conscience, I should leave you alone until you were better informed; now, however, I warn you that it goeth against my conscience as governor of this colony to let idle men play while others work, and if indeed you find matter of devotion in the day ye shall keep it quietly and soberly in your housen. There shall be neither reveling nor gaming in the streets, and that I promise you. Let whosoever owneth these toys take them away and store them out of sight; and remember, men, that the Apostle saith, ‘ If a man will not work neither shall he eat.’ ”

Silently and shamefacedly the revelers collected bats and balls, cricket stools, bars, poles, and iron weights, carrying them each man to his own house, and in the afternoon the chopping party was augmented by nearly every one of the new-comers.

CHAPTER XXX.

A SOLDIER'S INSTINCT.

A YEAR and more from that Christmas Day has sped, and again we find Bradford and Standish with Winslow gathered together at the governor's house, resting after the labors of the day, smoking the consoling pipe, and even tasting from time to time the contents of a square case bottle, which, with a jug of hot water and a basin of sugar were set forth upon a curious little clawfooted table worth to-day its weight in gold if only it could have survived.

None of the three look younger than they did when they first stepped upon the Rock; sun and wind, and winter storm and summer heat have bronzed their English complexions and deepened the lines about the quiet steadfast lips and anxious eyes. Already Bradford's shoulders were a little bowed, partly by the burden of his responsibility, partly by arduous manual labor, but upon his face had grown the serenity and somewhat of the impassiveness into which the Egyptians loved to mould the features of their kings,—that expression which of all others belongs to a man who uses great power firmly and decisively, and yet looks upon himself as but a steward, who soon or late shall be called to render a strict account of his stewardship.

And Winslow, courtly, learned, and fit for lofty enterprise, how bore he this life of toil and privation, this

constant contention with such foes as famine, and disease, and squalor, and uncouth savagery? Look at the portrait painted of him in London some years later, and see if there is not an infinite weariness, a brooding *Cui bono?* set as a seal upon those haughty features. Can one after studying that face much wonder that when the Massachusetts Bay authorities in 1646 besought Plymouth to spare their sometime governor, their wise and astute statesman, to arrange the Bay's quarrel with the Home government, Winslow eagerly accepted the mission, although as Bradford sadly records, his going was — “much to the weakening of this government, without whose consent he took these employments upon him.”

So well, however, did he fill the larger sphere for which his ambitious nature perhaps had secretly pined, that after four years of arduous service when the Massachusetts quarrel was well adjusted, and Winslow would have returned home, President Steele, whom he had helped to found the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, wrote to the Colonial Commissioners in New England that although Winslow was unwilling to be kept longer from his family, he could not yet be spared, because his great acquaintance and influence with members of Parliament made him invaluable to the work in hand.

Then in 1652 the Protector, Oliver Cromwell, placed him at the head of a committee for settling a Dutch quarrel; and in 1655 the same power named him governor of Hispaniola, and dispatched him thither with a fleet and body of soldiers to conquer and take possession of his new territory. But General Venable in command of the soldiers, and Admiral Penn in command of the

fleet, fell to loggerheads as to which was the other's superior, and even Winslow's diplomacy could not heal the breach ; so the attack upon Hispaniola proved a disgraceful failure, and as the fleet sailed away to attack Jamaica, the Great Commissioner, as they called him, fell ill of chagrin and worry, and after a few days of wild delirium wherein he stood upon Burying Hill, and drank of the Pilgrims' Spring, and spoke loving words to the wife and children he should see no more, he died, and was committed to the great deep with a salute of two-and-forty guns, and never a kiss or tear, for all who loved him were far away.

But all this honor, all this disaster, lies in the future, for as yet Winslow is only seven-and-twenty, and yet the lines of ambition, of weariness, of hauteur are foreshadowed upon his face ; already Time with his light indelible pencil has faintly traced the furrows he by and by will plow that all who run may read.

Perhaps the least change of all is that upon the captain's face, for before ever he landed on the Rock full twenty years of a soldier's life had set those firm lips, and steadied those marvelous eyes, and impressed upon every line of the deep bronzed face the air of the vigilant commander who was both born and bred for the post he fills so thoroughly. If any change, perhaps there is a softening one, for those keen eyes have looked so often upon misery and need, and so little upon bloodshed in these three last years, that they have gained somewhat of tenderness, somewhat of human sympathy ; and the look that dying men and women have strained their glazing eyes to see to the last, is not so far from the surface as once it was. But the governor is speaking, —

“Yes, my friends, I will confess to feeling more than a little uneasy over the matter. This party whom our sometime friend Weston hath sent over to settle at our very doors as it were, and to steal our trade with the Indians, and so hold us from paying off our debt to the Adventurers” —

“With whom he was still to abide as our Advocate,” growled Standish.

“Ay. He hath doubtless served us a sorry turn by not only dividing himself from the Adventurers, but setting up a rival trading-post of his own,” remarked Winslow.

“And worse than that is this news Squanto brings in to-day,” resumed the governor. “I mean the dealings of those new-comers with the Indians.”

“Yes, they carry themselves like both knaves and fools, and will presently find their own necks in the noose,” said Standish rapping the ashes out of his pipe with such force as to break it.

“But worse again than that,” suggested Winslow quietly, “is the danger they bring upon us. Hobomok warneth me that there is a wide discontent growing among the red men, springing from the conduct of these men at Weymouth as they call it. The Neponsets have suffered robbery, and insult, and outrage at their hands, and both the Massachusetts on the one hand and the Pokanokets on the other are in sympathy with them. Then you will see, brethren, that Canonicus with his Narragansetts, who already hath sent us his cartel of defiance, will make brief alliance with Massasoit, and all will combine to drive every white man from the country. There is hardly any bound to the mischief these roysterers at Weymouth have set on foot.”

"And Massasoit no longer our friend, since we refused to send him poor Squanto's head," said Bradford meditatively.

"Yes," laughed the captain. "'T is food for mirth, were a man dying, to see Squanto skulk at our heels like a dog who sees a lion in the path. He hardly dares step outside the palisado, for fear some envoy of Massasoit's shall pounce upon him."

"'T is a good lesson to teach him discretion," said Winslow. "Certes he stirred up strife between us and the sachem with his cock-and-bull stories."

"Especially when he sent his squaw to warn us that Canonicus with Massasoit and Corbitant were on the way from Namasket to devour us."

"Ay, no wonder Massasoit was aggrieved at being so slandered, and could he have got Tisquantum once within his clutches 'twould have gone hard with the poor fool. But never burnt child dreaded fire as he now doth the outside of the palisado."

"Didst hear, Winslow, that t' other day when some of us were unearthing a keg of powder buried there in the Fort, Squanto and a savage guest of his climb the hill to see what was going on? The magazine is passably deep as you know, and Squanto himself had never seen it opened; so when they saw Alden hand up the keg to Hopkins, the guest asked in the Indian tongue what was in it, and Squanto told him 't was the plague which just before our coming swept the land, and that the white men had captured it and buried it here upon the hill to let loose upon their enemies; and in the end the knave got a goodly price from his visitor for assurance that the plague should not be liberated till he had time to reach Sandwich."

All three men laughed, but Bradford said, — “I fear me Squanto hath done us no little harm with his double dealings, his jealousy of Hobomok, and his craving for bribes; but withal he hath been so good a friend to us, more than useful at the first when we knew naught of the place or how to live, or plant, or fish, that I thought right to risk even Massasoit’s enmity rather than to give our poor knave up to his wrath.”

“And then I never can forget,” said Winslow, “that Squanto as only survivor of the Patuxets was in some sort lord of the soil whereon we pitched.”

“Yes truly,” responded the captain with a short laugh. “Like myself he was born to great estates and sees them enjoyed by others.”

“Well then, since nothing is imminent in this matter of the Weymouth colonists and their quarrel with the Indians, we had better, now that the palisado around the town is complete” —

“Gates, bolts, bastions, all complete from the great rock around to the brook,” interposed Standish, his figure visibly dilating with satisfaction. Bradford smiled and allowed his eyes to rest affectionately for an instant upon his comrade, then continued in a lighter tone, —

“So having fortified your hold, Captain, it is now fitting that you should provision it. Thou knowest how in my journeyings last month I bought and stored corn at Nauset, and Manomet, and Barnstable, and now that we have a moment’s breathing space, it were well that some one should take the pinnace and fetch it. At the same time there will be good occasion to feel the pulse of the various chiefs, and determine what is their intended course and so settle our own.”

“Nay, Winslow is the man for that work, Governor,”

replied the captain bluntly. "I will go and get the corn, and if need be teach the savages a lesson upon the dangers of plotting and conniving, but as to talking smoothly with men who are lying to me"—

"But why prejudge them, Captain," began Winslow, when with a tap upon the door Squanto himself appeared ushering in a strange Indian whom he fluently presented as a friend of his who had come with great news. Bidden to deliver it, the stranger stated that a great Dutch ship had gone ashore at Sowams (Bristol), and would be wrecked unless help could be had, and this could not be given by the Indians, for Massasoit lay dying and no one would stir without his command.

This news changed the aspect of affairs, and Winslow was at once appointed to pay Massasoit a visit of inquiry, and in case of his death to make an alliance if possible with Corbitant, his probable successor as sachem of the Pokanokets. He also was to see the commander of the Dutch vessel, and in case of a wreck to offer the hospitality of Plymouth to the sufferers, for in case of the famine narrowly impending over the colony, the friendship and aid of the Dutch might become of the last importance. Besides this, the dangerous Narragansetts were known to have made alliance with the Dutch, and might by them be deterred from molesting the Plymouth settlers if they were known to be their friends.

"And so, Myles," declared Bradford finding himself alone with his friend at the end of the informal council, "thou must e'en go by thyself for the corn, with what men thou dost call for, and I doubt not we shall find thee burgeon into a diplomatist equal at least to the great Cecil or to Sir Walter Raleigh"—

"Ay, and that minds me," interrupted Standish "of

the news sent us by good Master Huddlestone of the Betsey, how the Virginia savages had massacred three hundred and forty-seven of Raleigh's settlers, and would have made an end of them but for warning given by a friendly Indian."

"Ay, it was heavy news, and a timely warning," said the governor losing his air of gayety and sighing deeply. "And if indeed Weston's men have angered the Neponsets to the pitch we fear, the news of this Virginia success will embolden them to undertake the same revenge. Be wary, Standish, and very gentle in thy dealings. If war is determined, let it be entered upon deliberately and formally; take not the matter into thine own hands and mayhap lose us our commander just at the onset."

"Ay Will, 'I'll roar thee gently' as any sucking dove, an' there seemeth need to roar at all."

"Best not roar at all until all thy comrades may join in unison," and once more Bradford's face lighted with its peculiar smile, the sort of smile one might bestow upon his double should he meet him and address him with a jest unknown to any other.

And so it came to pass that the next morning's rising sun saw two important expeditions leaving the hamlet in opposite directions. Toward the dark and almost pathless woods at the North marched Winslow accompanied by Master John Hampden, then visiting the colony and studying the science of republican government in its most perfect, because most simple, development. With them went Hobomok as guide and interpreter, and after them went the tearful prayers of Susanna Winslow, who loved her new lord better than she had the father of baby Peregrine toddling at her side, as she

stood in the cabin door to gaze after the little group already almost out of sight, and making now for the "Massachusetts trail" where it crosses Jones's River in Kingston. And as one driving over that pleasant road which now intersects the old trail pauses to look up its green ascent, or on across the placid stream it forded, does he not almost catch sight of the goodly forms of those young men, quaintly clad in doublet and hose and the wide hats or the close barret caps of the day, led by the sleek slender savage who patiently stood by, while Winslow turned and pointed out the beauties of sea and shore to his thoughtful companion.

"A pleasant sight, a goodly scene," said Hampden, as at last they turned away and struck into the dense forest. "If it be God's will I for one shall be well content to return hither and end my days."

"And yet there is world's work to do yonder for a man with an eye to read the times," said Winslow flinging a hand eastward.

"No wife or child to see me off, Mistress Winslow," said the captain as he passed the door where Susanna lingered, and she, smiling with the tear in her eye, answered pleasantly, —

"Then why not purvey thee one, Captain Standish? Well I wot you need not long go a-begging."

"Nay, none will look on a battered old soldier when fresh young faces are at hand," replied Standish casting a whimsical glance after Alden who preceded him down the hill, while the matron shook her head murmuring, — "Such fools as maids will be!"

Besides Alden, the captain had chosen five men, enough to man the boat, and to make a good defense in

case of attack, but among these he had included none of the fire-eaters, none of the independent souls of the little colony. Alden, to whom the captain had given the names of those to be summoned, had noted this feature of the selection, and ventured to comment upon it approvingly.

“Ay, lad,” replied his master with a grim smile. “Tis a service of danger, and a service of diplomacy, and I must have my force well in hand with no danger of a baulk from within. Dost know how the Romans conquered the world? I bade thee study my Cæsar in thy leisure moments.”

“By power to command, Master?”

“Nay, boy, but by power to obey. Their forces moved as one man, as a grand machine, and so they carried the Roman eagles to all the known world. There’s the model of a Roman soldier in that big Book yonder. He says to his Sovereign Lord, ‘Give not yourself the inconvenience of coming to heal my servant, but send some spirit to carry the command. I know how it is; I also am under the commands of my general, and men are under me. I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to the other, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.’ There’s the model of a soldier for you, John Alden; perfect obedience rendered, perfect obedience expected, perfect faith in the commander-in-chief. Now, then, off upon your errand, sir, and mind you tarry not at the Elder’s house. There is no errand there.”

The shallop’s first port was Nauset, and here, although the corn was obtained and loaded without difficulty, a thief stole some clothes from the boat while it was for the moment unguarded; and finding mild words of no

avail in their recovery, Standish sought Aspinet, who was encamped at a little distance from the shore, and refusing all hospitality or friendly conversation roundly announced that unless the missing articles were restored without delay he should at once make sail for Plymouth and declare war upon the whole tribe.

Marching down to his boat closely followed by Alden the captain suddenly paused and struck his heel upon the ground.

“Now then, I was to roar like a dove, and I have howled like any wolf! And I to preach obedience! nay then, John, thou ’rt free to flout me as thou wilt.”

“But, Captain, so far as I heard the governor’s command it was only to fetch some corn,” suggested Alden slyly. “All else was left at your discretion, as indeed all matters military are. Such was the tenor of the vote that made you our Captain.”

“Come, now, John, that’s not ill thought on ; that’s not so dull as might be,” replied the captain glancing merrily at his follower. “Thou ’st been studying under Winslow as well as Standish. Well, then, let us wait and see what comes of my roar.”

An hour later as the boat’s crew sat around their camp-fire eating their frugal dinner, the sound of many feet was heard breaking through the neighboring thickets, and Standish with a glance at Alden said quietly,—

“Stand to your arms, men, but softly and without offense until we see the need. The savages are in force.”

But as it turned out the force was but a guard of honor to Aspinet, who came in state, followed by two women bringing the stolen coats elaborately bound around with gayly colored withes ; these they at once took on board and laid in the cuddy, while Aspinet

improving upon Tisquantum's former lessons as to the mode of saluting sovereigns seized upon Standish's hand, and much to his disgust licked it from wrist to fingers, at the same time bending his knee in uncouth genuflection.

"Enough, enough, Aspinet," exclaimed the captain half laughing, half revolted at the homage. "The coats are returned I see" —

"And I have much beaten him who took them," averred Aspinet complacently. "And Aspinet is the friend of the white men though all other Indians turn against them."

"Why, that is well, sachem," replied Standish, who was already able to converse freely with the red men in their own tongue. "Keep you to that mind, and hold your tribe to it, and no harm's done. And now men, all aboard, and we will be off."

With a fair wind the shallop soon made Barnstable or Mattachiest, and here Iyanough (or Janno) met them on landing with protestations of welcome so profuse and unusual that the captain was at once upon his guard, especially as he noticed among the crowd many new faces which he was confident belonged to Massachusetts Indians. Night falling before the corn could be loaded, and ice making so suddenly as to freeze the shallop in before she fairly floated, the captain was obliged to accept an invitation for himself and crew to sleep in one of the Indian huts; but as the chief with some of his principal men escorted them to it, Standish's quick eye surprised a glance between one of the strangers and a Pamet Indian called Kamuso, who had always appeared to be one of the warmest friends of the white men, but in whose manner to-night Standish felt something of treachery and evil intention.

And he was right, for Kamuso had been won over to the conspiracy beginning with the Narragansetts and extending all the way down the Cape, and so soon as runners from the Nausets had warned the Mattakees that Standish and a small crew were about to land among them, it was agreed that now was the best time to cut off The-Sword-of-the-White-Men, and so deprive the colony of one of its principal safeguards. Janno himself would fain have spared Standish, with whom he had ever been on friendly terms; but Kamuso so wrought upon the Mattakee warriors that their sachem was forced either to drop the reins altogether or to suffer his unruly steeds to take their own course. Like Pontius Pilate he chose the latter course, and to his own destruction. Before the pinnace was anchored, the plan of the massacre was fully laid, and Kamuso had claimed the glory of killing The Sword with his own hand.

But the subtle instinct which was Standish's sixth sense warned him of some unknown danger, and having carefully inspected the wigwam offered to his use, he directed that the fire newly kindled outside the door should be extinguished; and while the Indians officiously busied themselves in doing this, the captain by a word, a look, a sign, drew his men inside the hut, and rapidly conveyed to them his suspicions, and enjoined the greatest caution upon all.

"The fire would have bewrayed our forms to archers hidden in yonder thicket," added he. "And as I will have half to watch while the others sleep, the watch must keep themselves under shelter of the cabin and away from any chance of ambush."

Murmurs of wrath, of wonder, but of acquiescence

arose from the half dozen bearded throats around, and the captain at once set the watch, to be relieved every two hours. In vain Janno offered another wigwam if this were too small, and urged that all his white brothers should sleep at once while his own men watched; in vain Kamuso tried to attach himself to the party inside, meaning to stab the captain in his sleep; without a show of anger or suspicion Standish put both attempts aside, and finally with a jeering laugh advised Janno to retire to his own wigwam and to order his braves to do the same, for some of the white men as he averred were given to discharging their pieces in their sleep, or at any shadow that came within range, and it might happen that some of his friends should thus come by harm, which would be a great grief to him.

“The Sword has pierced our intention,” said Janno to Kamuso in their own tongue as the two withdrew. “Better give it up. He has eyes all around him.”

“I will kill him,” retorted Kamuso sullenly. “To-night, to-morrow, next week,—I will kill him.”

The next day so soon as the shallop floated and was loaded Standish embarked, sick at heart as he received the slavish homage of Janno, whom he had liked and trusted so much, and who even while he yielded to the plot for the captain’s death and that of all his friends really clung to him in love and reverence. Poor Janno, weak but not wicked, his punishment was both swift and stern; for fleeing a little later from the vengeance of the white men, he perished miserably among the swamps and thickets of Barnstable, and his lonely grave was only lately discovered. Go and look at his bones in Pilgrim Hall at Plymouth and muse upon the dangers of cowardice and weakness.

As the shallop pushed off from shore, an Indian came running down the beach, and with a cat-like spring leaped upon the deck. It was Kamuso, who said he was bound for Sandwich and would beg a passage in the pinnace.

A sudden spark kindled in the captain's red-brown eyes and one hand tugged impatiently at his moustache, but he said nothing, and the Indian proceeded to make himself useful in a variety of ways; and as the wind was favorable and the distance short, Standish made no open objection to the company of the spy, but busied himself with freshly charging his weapons, and curiously examining every inch of Gideon's shining blade.

A little after noon the shallop made the harbor of Sandwich, or as the Pilgrims called it Manomet, and Standish at once went ashore, eager to see if Canacum shared in the wide-spread disaffection of the Indians. But ten minutes in the sachem's wigwam convinced the wary observer that something was wrong, for the old friendliness of manner had given place to restraint and formality; and although Canacum was very ready to deliver the corn, and professed great pleasure at the captain's visit, his voice and manner were both cold and false, and such of his braves as came into the wigwam showed a very different face from what Standish had hitherto encountered.

Suddenly a sound was heard without, and as the captain sprang to his feet and laid his hand upon Gideon's hilt, the door-mat was thrust aside, and two Indians recognized by their paint as Neponsets entered the cabin. Canacum received them with effusive cordiality, and presented the principal one to Standish as Wituwamat a pniese of the Neponsets.

Standish received the careless salutation of the newcomer in silent gravity, and stepping to the door summoned Howland and Alden to his side, first however sending a message to the boat-keepers to be well on guard against a surprise.

Returning into the hut with his two friends, the captain found Wituwamat upon his feet beginning an impassioned harangue to Canacum, who listened uneasily. Standish was already an excellent Indian scholar, and could converse in several dialects with great ease ; but so soon as he appeared Wituwamat fell into a style so figurative and blind, and took pains to use such unusual and obsolete expressions, that Canacum himself could hardly understand him, and Standish was soon left hopelessly in the background. At a later day, however, one of the warriors then present repeated to the captain the amount of the Neponset's message, which was that Obtakiest, sachem of the Neponsets, had entered into a solemn compact with Canonicus, sachem of the Narragansetts, to cut off the Weymouth colonists, root and branch ; but that as the Plymouth men would assuredly revenge their brethren, it was necessary that they should perish as well, and that while the two chiefs mentioned advanced upon the settlement from the west, they invited Canacum, Janno, and Aspinet to fall upon them from the east, and having slain man and boy to equably divide the women and other plunder. As earnest of his authority Wituwamat here presented Canacum with a knife stolen or bought from the Weymouth settlers, and jeeringly said the coward pale faces had brought over the weapons that should cut their own throats.

Having thus delivered his message, the Neponset indulged himself in a burst of self-glorification, boasting

that he had in his day killed both French and Englishmen, and that he found the sport very amusing, for they died crying and making wry faces more like children than men.

“What is the impudent villain saying, and what means that knife, Captain?” muttered Howland in the captain’s ear, but he shaking his head impatiently replied,—

“He means violence and treachery of some sort, but what form it takes I wot not. Be on your guard, John.”

The harangue ended, refreshments were served, but the Neponsets were now treated with so much more courtesy and attention than the white men that Standish refusing the poorer portion offered to him and his comrades, rose and indignantly left the cabin, ordering his men to construct a shelter near the beach, and there cook some of the provisions they had brought. But they had hardly begun to do this when Kamuso appeared, full of indignant protests at Canacum’s inhospitality, and loudly declaring that an affront to his friends was an affront to him, and he should desert the wigwam where the red men were feasting, and share the humbler fare of his white friends.

“Well, I wish thou hadst brought along a kettle to cook some corn in!” exclaimed Standish with something of his old joviality of manner, for his suspicions in falling upon Canacum had in some degree lifted from Kamuso, who certainly played his part with wonderful skill, and had he been white instead of red, and civilized instead of savage, might have left his name on record as a diplomatist beside that of Machiavelli or Ignatius Loyola.

“A kettle! My brother would like a kettle!” ex-

claimed he now. "Nay, a friend of mine hath one which I will buy of him and present to The Sword. I am rich, I Kamuso, and can make rich presents to those I love."

And rushing back to the wigwams, he presently returned with a good-sized brass kettle, which he ostentatiously laid at the captain's feet, refusing the handful of beads Standish offered in return.

"Hm!" growled the captain. "That's not in nature. Alden use the kettle an' thou wilt, but after, return it to the Pamet. We'll not have them making a Benjamin's sack of our shallop."

After dinner Standish so peremptorily demanded that his corn should at once be put aboard that Canacum could do nothing but yield. The squaws were summoned, and John Alden stood by with pencil and paper, keeping tally as each delivered her basket-full on the beach, while Howland standing mid-leg deep in the icy water shot it over the gunwale.

"Here men, bear a hand, and let us get this thing over and be off," commanded Standish, himself seizing a full basket and motioning Dotey to another.

"And I, and I, my brother!" exclaimed Kamuso in his loud braggadocio manner as he awkwardly lifted a third. "Never in all my life have I done squaw's work, for I am a brave, I am a pniese, but what my brother does I do."

"Nay, 't is too much honor!" replied Standish with his grimmest smile; "especially as thou art somewhat awkward" —

And in effect the Pamet as he tried to swing the full basket off his shoulder lost his hold, and the corn came showering down upon the sand. At length, however,

the tale was complete, and as the tide was out, and night coming on, the captain decided to camp once more upon the beach, refusing somewhat curtly the pressing invitation sent by Canacum that the white men should sleep in his house. And once more Kamuso loudly proclaimed that he was of the white men's party and should share their quarters wherever they might be. Standish silently permitted him to do as he would, but, as on the previous evening, he divided the little company into watches, one to sleep and one to stand on guard.

"So soon as he sleeps I shall kill him," muttered Kamuso to Wituwamat, as they secretly met behind Canacum's wigwam. "Give me now the knife sent by Obtakiest."

"Here it is, brother, and when it is red with the blood of The Sword it shall be thine own. Else it returns to him who sends it."

"It shall be red, it shall drink, it shall drip with the brave blood, it shall shine as the sun rising across the waters! It shall feast, and Kamuso shall be chief of Obtakiest's pnieses; yes, he shall be sachem of the Massachusetts!"

Wituwamat made no reply in words, but as he turned away shivered heavily. Perhaps a premonition of his own terrible fate crossed his brain, perhaps the hooting of the owl just then skimming across the thicket stirred his superstitious fancy, but without a word he reentered the wigwam; and Kamuso concealing the knife went back to the randevous, where already the first watch slept, and Standish, in command of the second, stood beside the fire leaning on his snapphance, and, deep in meditation fixed his eyes upon the approaching savage so sternly that he believing that all was discovered was

on the point of springing at his prey, and risking all upon one sudden blow, when the captain, awaking from his reverie, sighed profoundly, and perceiving for the first time Kamuso's approach quietly said, —

“So it is thee, Pamet! Go back and sleep warm in the wigwams of the Mattakees. We need no help here.”

“Kamuso is no Mattakee; Kamuso is the friend of the white men. While The Sword wakes, Kamuso will gaze upon him and learn how to become the terror of his foes.”

“T is easier to be the terror of one's foes than the delight of one's friends,” muttered Standish gloomily, and then pulling himself together he stirred the embers with his heel, and throwing on more wood said carelessly, —

“E'en as thou wilt, Kamuso, go or stay, watch or sleep, 't is all one to me.”

And marching up and down the strip of level beach the soldier hummed an old ballad song of Man, which Rose had loved to sing, and clean forgot the savage who, crouching in the shadow, fingered the knife hilt hidden in his waist cloth, and never removed the gaze of his snaky eyes from the figure of his destined prey.

The night went on, and Standish waked the second watch and dismissed the first, but still himself took no rest, nor felt the need of it, as he paced up and down, his outward senses alert to the smallest sign, and his memory roaming at will over scenes for many years forgot; over boyhood's eager days, his mother's tenderness, his father's death upon a French battle-field, his own early days as a soldier, his home-coming to find Barbara acting a daughter's part to the dying mother — Rose — ah Rose! He stood a moment at the point of his promenade

furthest from the randevous, his back to the fire, his gaze fixed upon the sea whose lapping waves seemed whispering with sobbing sighs, Rose! — Rose! — Rose! —

A faint sound upon the shingle caught the outward ear of the soldier, and wheeling instinctively he faced the Pamet, who with his hand upon the hilt of the dagger had crept up to within six feet of his victim, and already had selected the spot between those square shoulders where the fatal blow should be planted.

“ Ha savage! What does this mean! Why are you tracking me! ” demanded the captain angrily, but the wily Indian, instead of starting back and betraying himself by terror, advanced quietly, not even removing his hand from the hidden knife hilt, and answered smoothly in his own tongue, —

“ The red man’s moccason sounds not upon the sand as the white man’s boot. I did but come to ask my lord if he will not rest at all. Midnight is long past, and the day must bring its labors. Will not The Sword sheath for a while his intolerable splendor in sleep, while his slave watches for him? ”

“ Why, Kamuso, thou’rt more than eloquent! Pity but thou shouldst be trained, and brought to London to show off before the King! ” laughed Standish. “ But sleep and I have quarreled for to-night. I know not how it is, but never after a sound night’s rest did I feel more fresh and on the alert. Go thou and sleep if thou’rt sleepy, but come not creeping after me again, or I’ll send thee packing! I like not such surprises.”

“ The will of my lord is the will of his slave,” meekly replied Kamuso, and crept back to his former sheltered nook beside the fire. The chill March night grew on toward morning, the east reddened with an angry glare,

the solemn stars wheeled on their appointed courses, and Mars, who had held the morning watch, gave way to Sol, bidding him have a care of his son, whom he had left gazing with sleepless eyes across the waters to the East.

“Up, men! ’Tis morning at last, and surely never was a night so long as this. Up, and let us break our fast and be off within the hour!”

So cried the captain, and in a moment all his command was afoot and active. Kamuso, his face black with sullen rage, retreated to the wigwams to confess his defeat to Wituwamat and Canacum, who listening said quietly, —

“His totem is too strong for us. The Sword will never fall before the tomahawk.”

“It is because he is so strong that Obtakiest took a knife of the white man’s make and use, and sent it. The powah that charmed the weapons of The Sword may have charmed this knife also.”

And Kamuso drawing the Weymouth knife from his belt regarded it with disgust for a moment, then thrusting it back into his belt doggedly declared, —

“But all is not over. Wait, my brothers, wait for the end, and then say if Kamuso is a fool.”

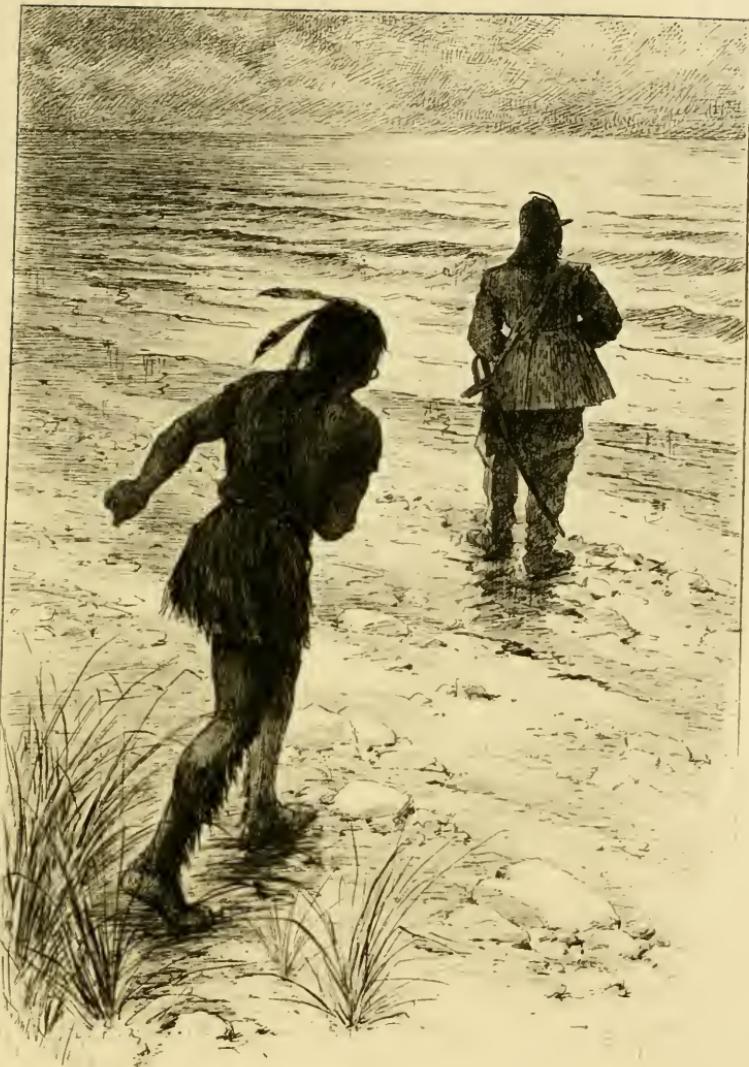
As the pinnace drew out of Manomet Harbor Standish for the first time perceived that the Pamet was aboard her, and rather sharply demanded, —

“Whither bound now, Kamuso? Thou didst but ask passage to Manomet.”

“My white brothers have not all the corn they need, have they?” asked the Indian, an air of humble sympathy pervading his voice and manner.

“Nay. If the famine we forebode is upon us we need

Kamuso and Standish



twice, thrice, as much as this, before the harvest not yet sown is ready for use."

"For that then is Kamuso here. At Nauset, Aspinet hath great store of corn hidden from the white men, but it is not his alone, it is mine, it is the tribe's, it is The Sword's. Let my lord come to Nauset and I will have his canoe filled to the brim, there shall not be room to put in one grain more — Kamuso says it."

"Hm ! That would be a matter of fifty bushels or more," replied Standish literally. "What say you, Howland ? What is your mind, men ? "

Various brief replies showed that the mind of the crew was to obey the captain's orders, and after a moment's thought he muttered to Howland in Dutch, —

"I like not this fellow's carriage. He is too smooth to be honest, and yet what can one wretched savage do against seven men armed and on their watch ? But pass the word among the rest to be wary, and Alden, I leave it in charge to thee, lad, in case the savage treacherously smites me as I think he meant last night, do thou avenge me."

"He 'll not breathe thrice after his blow, Master," replied Alden in his deepest tones.

"Well said, lad ; but gentle thy face and eke thy voice, or he 'll suspect. Now then, lads, put her before this western wind, and ho for Nauset once more ! "

The command was obeyed, but lo the wind, which had since sunrise blown softly from the south of west making a fair breeze for Nauset near the end of the Cape, now suddenly hauled round with angry gusts and gathering mists, until it stood in the northeast right in the teeth of the shallop's course, while every sign of sky and sea foreboded a gathering storm.

“ His totem is too strong,” muttered the Pamet in his throat, and the hand beneath his garment clinching the handle of the dagger seized with it a handful of his own flesh and gripped it savagely, while in silence he called upon his gods for help.

But none came, more than to the priests of Baal what time Elijah jeered them, and after a brief consultation with his crew Standish once more altered his course, and the pinnace with double-reefed sails flew before the rising wind like a hunted creature to her covert, bearing The-Sword-of-the-White-Men safely to his post.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A POT OF BROTH.

YES, a Pot of Broth, and one more classic than any black broth ever supped by Spartan; more pregnant of Fate than the hell-broth compounded by Macbeth's witches; broth in which was brewed the destiny of a great nation, broth but for whose brewing I certainly, and you, if you be of Pilgrim strain, had never been, for in its seething liquid was dissolved a wide-spread and most powerful conspiracy that in its fruition would have left Plymouth Rock a funeral monument in a field of blood.

Hardly an hour after the pinnace had landed its passengers at the Rock, and the Pamet, sullenly declining farther hospitality, had proceeded on his way to meet Obtakiest and report his ill success, when Winslow with John Hampden and Hobomok entered the village from the north, sore spent with travel and scanty food, but laden with matter of the profoundest interest. A Council of the chiefs, including nearly all of the Mayflower men, was immediately called together in the Common house, now used altogether for these assemblages and for divine worship, and first Standish and then Winslow were called upon for their reports.

The captain's was given with military brevity.

“I have brought a hundred bushels of corn and all the men I carried away. The savages are no doubt

disaffected, and a notorious blood-thirsty rascal called Wituwamat, a Neponset, brought Canacum a knife where-with to kill some one, and I fancy 'tis myself ; but though he impudently delivered both knife and message in my presence, he so wrapped up his meaning in new and strange phrases, that I could make but little of it. Perhaps Master Winslow can read my riddle as well as tell his own story."

"Methinks I can, Captain," replied Winslow pleasantly ; and then in smooth and polished phrase bearing such resemblance to Standish's rough and brief utterances as a rapier doth to a battle-axe, the future Grand Commissioner narrated how he had found Massasoit as it seemed already dying, for he could neither see, nor swallow either medicine or food.

The sachem's wigwam was so crowded with visitors that the white men could scarcely edge their way in, and around the bed circled the powahs at their incantations, "making," said Winslow, "such a hellish noise as dis-tempered us that were well, and was therefore unlike to ease him that was sick."

This ended, and about half the guests persuaded to withdraw, the dying chief was with difficulty made to understand who were his visitors, and feebly groping with his hand he faintly murmured, —

"*Winsnow, keen Winsnow ?*" (Is it you Winsnow ?) To which Winslow gently replied, grasping the cold hand, —

"It is Winslow who is come to see you, sachem."

"I shall never see thee again, Winsnow," muttered the dying man, and those standing by explained that the sight had left his eyes some hours before.

But Winslow, after patiently repeating over and over

the message of sympathy and friendship delivered him by the governor, produced a little pot of what he calls a confection of many comfortable conserves, and with the point of his knife inserted a portion between the sick man's teeth.

"It will kill him! He cannot swallow," declared the favorite wife, who stood chafing her lord's hands; but presently as the conserve, prepared by Doctor Fuller and of rare virtue, melted, it trickled down the patient's throat, who presently whispered, "More!" and Winslow well pleased administered several doses. Then, finding the mouth whose muscles had now relaxed, foul with fever, this courtly and haughty gentleman, this necessity of the Lord Protector of England, this Grand Commissioner of the future, with his own hands performed a nurse's loathly work, and ceased not until the sachem, refreshed, relieved, rescued from death, was able to ask for drink, when Hampden prepared some of the confection with water, and Winslow administered it. All night this work went on, and when morning broke, the sick man could see and hear and swallow as well as ever he could, and his appetite returning he demanded broth such as he had tasted at Plymouth.

Now that especial broth was a delicious compound of Priscilla's compounding, and Winslow knew no more of its recipe than you or I do, nor were any materials such as should go to the making of white man's broth at hand. Worst of all, Winslow had never taken note or share in culinary labors, for Susanna was a notable housewife and had both men and maids at her command; but a willing mind is a powerful teacher, and not only Winslow the man, was full of Christian charity, but Winslow the statesman desired intensely that Mas-

sasoit should remain sachem of the Pokanokets, instead of making way for Corbitant, who had once declared his enmity to the white men, and had only been put down by the strong hand.

So Winslow leaving his patient for a moment went into the fresh air, both to revive himself and to write a hasty note, begging Doctor Fuller to send not only some medicine suited to the case, but a pair of chickens, and a recipe for making them into broth, with such other material as might be needed.

Fifty miles of forest lay between Sowams and Plymouth, but a swift runner was dispatched at once with the missive, and the promise of a rich reward if he hastened his return; then Winslow turned to his fellow-statesman who stood looking on with an amused smile.

“Master Hampden, know you how to make broth?” demanded he.

“I have no teaching but mother wit,” replied Hampden. “And you are richer in that than I.”

“Nay then — here Pibayo, is that thy name?”

“Ahhe,” replied the squaw modestly.

“Thou hast corn in store?”

“Ahhe,” again replied the woman, and Winslow making the most of his little stock of Indian words directed her to bruise some of the maize in her stone mortar, and meantime calling for one of the egg-shaped earthen stew-pans used by the natives, he half filled it with water, and settled it into the hot ashes of the open air fire. The maize ready, he winnowed it in his hands, blowing away the husks and chaff, and poured the rest into the boiling water.

“So far well,” remarked he gayly to Hampden; “but what next? I remember in the garden of our home at

Droitwich there was a gay plot of golden bloom that my mother called broth marigolds, but we shall hardly come by such in this wilderness."

"Methinks there are turnips in broth," ventured Hampden.

"And there are turnips in Plymouth, but that is not here," retorted Winslow. "Come, let us see what herbs Dame Nature will afford."

A little search and some questioning showed the herbalists a goodly bush of sassafras, and Winslow, who with the rest of his generation ascribed almost magical virtues to this plant, enthusiastically tugged up several of its roots, and cleansing them in the brook, sliced them thinly into his broth. Finally he added a handful of strawberry leaves, the only green thing to be found, and leaving the mess to stew for a while, he strained it through his handkerchief, and presented it to his patient who eagerly drank a pint of it.

Perhaps there really is magic in sassafras, perhaps the child of nature throve upon this strictly Pre-Raphaelitish composition, perhaps Indian gruel with strawberry leaves in it and strained through a pocket handkerchief is the disguise under which the Elixir Vitæ masquerades among us; certain it is that beneath its benign influence the sachem of the Pokanokets revived so rapidly that when, twenty-four hours from his departure, the runner arrived with the chickens and the physic, his master frankly threw the physic to the dogs, and handed over the fowls to Pibayo, bidding her guard them carefully, feed them well, and order them to lay eggs and provide chickens for future illnesses.

So this was the fateful broth of which we spoke but now, and its results were immediate, for although Massasoit himself said nothing more than,—

“Now I perceive that the English are my friends and love me, and while I live I will never forget this kindness that they have showed me,” he in a private conclave with some of his most trusted pnieses solemnly charged Hobomok with a message for Winslow, only to be delivered however as upon their return they came within sight of Plymouth. This message, to hear which the Council had been convened, was to the effect that the Neponsets had fully determined to fall upon the Weymouth settlers and cut them off root and branch so soon as two of them, who were ship-carpenters, had completed some boats they were now building to the order of the Indians.

The forty braves of the Neponset tribe were fully equal to this task, and if the Plymouth Colony would remain neutral they had no desire to injure them; but knowing full well that they would not, and having moreover a superstitious dread of Standish’s prowess and abilities, they had arranged with all the tribes lying near Plymouth to join with them, and on an appointed day to massacre the entire colony.

“Ay, ay,” interrupted Standish at this point of Winslow’s narrative. “Now do I comprehend some of the figures and parables of Wituwamat’s impudent speech, what time he delivered the knife to Canacum. The bloody hound—well, brother, get on with thy narrative.”

So Winslow told how Massasoit had been urged again and again to join the conspiracy, but never would, although his pride had been indeed sore wounded by a lying story of how the governor and captain and Winslow, his especial friend, having been told of his desperate illness, cared naught for it, not even enough to send Hobomok his own pniese to inquire for him; and now, being undeceived, he would himself have killed the liar,

whose name was Pecksuot, but on second thought left him to the white men whom he earnestly charged to take the matter into their own hands, and with no warning, no parley, to go and kill Pecksuot, Wituwamat, Obtakiest, and several other ringleaders of the conspiracy, for, as he assured them most earnestly and solemnly, unless these men were promptly and effectually dealt with, both the Weymouth colony and themselves would be overwhelmed and massacred without mercy. Finally, the sachem added that he as Sagamore of the Pokanokets, and as it were regent of the Massachusetts, had authority to order the punishment of these rebels to his expressed commands for peace, and he hereby did so.

“And very sensible and good the sachem’s counsel seemeth in my ears,” remarked Standish complacently.

“Nay, Captain,” replied the Elder sternly. “Men’s lives are not so lightly to be dealt withal. We came among these salvages to convert them to the knowledge of God, not to slaughter them.”

“Meseemeth, Elder,” returned Standish impatiently, “it is a question of our lives or theirs. I should be loth to see your gray hairs dabbled in blood, and Mistress Brewster carried into captivity to drudge as the slave of a squaw.”

The elder turned even paler than his wont and covered his eyes with his hand, but murmured, —

“God His will be done.”

“Ay, so say I,” replied the captain more gently. “But as I read Holy Writ the chosen folk were often punished for sparing their foes, but never for laying roundly on. ‘Go and smite me Amalek and spare not,’ is one of many orders, and if the commander-in-chief obeyed not he was cashiered without so much as a court-martial.”

Several eager voices rose in reply, but Bradford lightly tapping the table around which the Council was gathered said decisively,—

“These matters are too large, brethren, to be thus discussed. Let each one declare his mind soberly and briefly, and without controversy. To-morrow is the day appointed for our town meeting and annual election of officers, and I will then lay the case before the whole, and also will rehearse our own conclusions. Then, the voice of the majority shall decide the matter.”

And so began the reign of “the people” in America, for this was the first great question to be decided since the coming of the Fortune had so enlarged the colony that the Council was no longer composed of the whole, as it was when the treaty with Massasoit was concluded.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SUNSET GUN.

THE town meeting was over, and its decisions if important were unanimous, even Elder Brewster, converted perhaps by Standish's Biblical references, giving his voice for the stringent measures rendered necessary by the growth and magnitude of the conspiracy.

Captain Standish with what force he might select was to take the pinnace, and under cover of a trading expedition make a landing at Weymouth, and first of all discover from the colonists themselves the truth of their condition. If it should prove as represented he was to at once attack whatever leaders of the conspiracy might be found, and in especial he was to slay Wituwamat, of whom Massasoit had spoken as the heart of the conspiracy, and to bring his head to Plymouth to be set over the gate of the Fort as a proof and a warning to their neighbors on the east, whom they would not now punish, but hoped rather to persuade.

"And now, Captain Standish, it were well that you should select those whom you will have of your company, while we are all gathered together here," said the governor when the primary question had been finally decided.

Standish rose and looked thoughtfully from face to face.

"'T is a hard matter," said he at last with a gleam of

pride in his eye. "Here be fifty good men and true, and I need no more than half a dozen."

"The Neponsets number forty warriors," suggested Winslow.

"Yes, but they will not be gathered together, having no knowledge of our purpose, and if the shallop is watched from shore, as belike it will be, a large force of armed men would bewray our intent, and runners would gather the braves in a few hours and so bring down a great slaughter upon the tribe," replied the captain in confident simplicity. "But if we go no more in number than ordinary, no more than in our late voyage to Nauset for corn, they will suspect nothing, and the matter may be well concluded with no more than five or six examples, Wituwamat being the principal."

"And glad am I, brother, to see a certain tenderness of human life in your counsels," said the elder approvingly.

"Nay, elder, I am not all out a cannibal and ogre," replied the captain. "So now I will choose me Hopkins and Howland and Billington, and Eaton and Browne and Cooke and Soule, seven hearts of oak and arms of steel: it is enough."

"And not one of us Fortune men, Captain?" demanded Robert Hicks, a stalwart fellow who afterward became almost a rebel to the colony's authority.

"Nay, Master Hicks," replied the captain gravely. "I mean no discredit to the courage or the good will of the new-comers, of whom you are a principal; but this service is one of strategy as well as daring, and so soon as the pinnace leaves yon Rock, there must be but one mind and one will in her, and that is mine. The men whom I have chosen, my comrades of the *Mayflower*, I

know as I know mine own sword, and I can trust them as I do him. There's no offense Master Hicks, but a stricken field is no place to learn to handle a new sword or a new comrade."

"And not me, Master," said a low voice as the captain stepped out of the Common house and turned his face homeward.

"Nay, Jack, I've a text for thee too. 'I have married a wife and cannot come.'" And with a somewhat bitter laugh he strode on up the hill, leaving John Alden looking sadly after him.

That night as Standish slowly entered the Fort to fire his sunset gun, he was startled at seeing a muffled figure seated upon an empty powder keg in an angle of the works. As he appeared she rose, and pushing back her hood showed the beautiful face of Priscilla Molines, now strangely pale and distraught.

"You here, Mistress Molines," exclaimed the captain somewhat sternly. "Alden is not coming."

"It is not Alden but Captain Standish I fain would speak withal, and I hope he will pardon my forwardness in seeking him here."

The captain briefly waved the apology aside. "Your commands, madam?" inquired he.

"Nay, nay sir, my father's dear loved friend, my brother's tender nurse,—mine—oh what shall I say, how shall I plead for a little kindness. Have pity on a froward maid's distress"—

"What Priscilla, thou canst weep!"

"And why not when my heart is sorrowful unto death?"

"But—there then, child, wipe thine eyes and look up and let me see thee smile as thou art wont. What is it, maid? What is thy sorrow?"

“That you will not forgive me, sir.”

“Forgive thee for what?” But the captain dropped the hand he had seized in his sympathy, and the dark look crept back to his face.

“Thou’rt going to a terrible danger — my friend — and it may be to thy death.”

“Well girl, ’t is not worth crying for if I am. Life is not so sweet to me that I should over much dread to lay it down with honor.”

“Oh, oh, and it is my fault!” — sobbed Priscilla.

The captain strode up and down the narrow space pulling at his red beard and frowning thoughtfully; then stopping before the girl who stood as he had left her, he quietly said, —

“Priscilla, I was indeed thy father’s friend, and I am thine, and I fain would have wed thee, and thou didst refuse, preferring John Alden, who also is my friend, even as my younger brother, whose honor and well being are dear to me as mine own. What then is the meaning of thy grief, and what is thy request?”

“My grief is that since the day I gave John Alden my promise, you, sir, have been no more my friend, but ever looked upon me with coldness and disdain; and now that you go, it may be to your death, it breaketh my heart to have it so, and I fain would beg your forgiveness for aught I have done to offend you, though I know not what it may be.”

“Know not — well, well, let it pass — ’t is but one more traverse. Yes child, I forgive thee for what to me seemed like something of scorn and slight, something of double dealing and treachery — nay, we ’ll say no more on ’t. Here is my hand, Priscilla — and surely thy father’s friend may for once taste thy cheek. Now child, we ’re friends and dear friends, and if yon savage

The Sunset Gun



Frank T. Merrill.

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sheathes his knife in my heart perhaps thou 'lt shed a tear or two, and say a prayer for the soul of — thy father's friend. And now thy petition, for time presses."

" That thou wilt take John Alden with thee."

" What then ! Who shall read a woman's will aright ! I left him at home for thy sake, Priscilla."

" So I guessed and I thank you — nay, I thank you not for so misjudging me." And the fire in the hazel eyes upraised to his, dried the tears sharply.

" Why, what now ! Dost want thy troth-plight lover slain ? "

" No in truth, nor do I want my troth-plight friend, for thou art that now, slain ; but neither do I want the one nor the other to lurk safely at home when his brothers are at the war. There 's no coward's blood in my heart more than in yours, Captain Standish, and I care not to shelter any man behind my petticoats. I have not wed John Alden all this long year and more, because I would not wed with your frown black upon my heart, and I will not wed him now until he hath showed himself a man upon that same field whence you do not greatly care to come alive."

" Nay, Priscilla, I care more now for life than I did an hour since, for I have a friend."

" And you will take John, and if he comes home alive you 'll smile upon our marriage ? "

" Yes girl, yes to both. God bless you, Priscilla, for a brave and true woman. And now — good-night."

A moment later as the dark clad figure flitted down the hill Standish stood with bared head and fixed eyes silent for a little space, and then the boom of the sunset gun sounded in solemn Amen to the soldier's silent prayer.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PECKSUOT'S KNIFE.

THE next morning as the village sat at breakfast, two men at half an hour's interval passed hastily down the forest trail, and entering the town sought the governor's house.

The first was Wassapinewat, brother of Obtakiest, chief of the Neponsets, who, having suffered both wounds and terror in Corbitant's attempted rebellion, now hastened to turn State's evidence, and while warning the white men of his brother's intended attack wash his hands of any share in it.

The other visitor was a long lank Caucasian, Phineas Pratt by name, carpenter by trade, Weymouth settler by position. This man half dead with suffering of various sorts, footsore and weary, came stumbling down the King's Highway just as Bradford came out of his own door followed by Wassapinewat, at sight of whom Phineas started and trembled, then pointing a finger at him shrieked, —

“Have a care, Governor! 'T is one of the bloody salvages sworn to take all our lives! ”

“Nay, friend Pratt, for I remember thee well, 't is a penitent robber now, come to warn us of danger. Me-thinks thine errand may be the same. Come in, and after due refreshment tell us the truth of this matter.”

But weary as he was, the excited fugitive would pause for neither rest nor refreshment until he had poured out his story of the wrongs, the insults, the threats with which the Neponsets had harassed the Weymouth men in their weakness, in part revenging the foul wrongs they while strong had put upon the savages, until in an Indian council of the day before, it had been formally resolved to wait only for two days' more work upon the boats which Phineas and another were finishing, and then to inaugurate the massacre.

Both Pratt and Wassapinewat had by different channels learned the result of this council, and each had resolved to not only save himself from the explosion of this mine, but to warn the Plymouth colonists of their danger, and each had set out by a slightly different route from the other and made the journey in ignorance of the other's movements.

It was afterward discovered, however, that Pratt's flight was at once discovered, and an Indian dispatched to overtake and kill him, a catastrophe averted by the carpenter's straying from the path in the darkness, so that his pursuer reached Plymouth, and went on to Manomet before the village was astir.

These two confirmatory reports were very welcome to Bradford, upon whom the nominal responsibility of the expedition rested, and to the elder whose reverend face was very pale and grave in these days.

Standish, however, as he had felt no doubts, now felt no added impulse, but went quietly on, seeing his command and his stores embarked, and examining personally the arms of his eight soldiers.

At last all was ready, the men seated each at his post, Hobomok in the bow, and Standish at the stern,

the men and boys who stayed behind grouped upon the shore, while a vague cloud of skirts and kirtles hovered upon the brow of Cole's Hill, when Elder Brewster, baring his white head, stepped upon the Rock, and raising his hands to heaven prayed loud and fervently that the God of battles, the God of victory, the God of their fathers, would bless, protect, and prosper those who went forth in His name to do battle for His Right; and as the old man's voice rose clear and sonorous in its impassioned appeal, the first breath of a favoring wind came out of the South, and the lapping waves of the incoming tide answered melodiously to the deep diapason of the Amen sent up from fifty bearded throats.

"And now we may go home and make our mourning weeds," said Priscilla with a petulant half-sob, half-laugh, as she and Mary Chilton turned away from the wheatfield on the hill.

"Nay, John Alden will come home safe, I'm sure on't," said Mary gently, but her vivacious friend turned sharply upon her.

"And if he comes not at all, I'd liefer know him dead in honor, than lingering here among the women like some others."

"Gilbert Winslow, or his brother John if you mean him, would have gone as gladly as any man had the captain chosen him," replied Mary composedly, if coldly, and Priscilla turned and clapped her in a sharp embrace, crying out that indeed her friend were no more than right to beat her for a froward child.

The prosperous wind lasted all the way, and before noon the shallop lay at anchor close beside the Swan, a small craft owned by the Weymouth men, and intended for their use in trading and fishing. Standish's

first visit was to her, and much to his surprise he found her both undefended and deserted. Landing with four of his men he next proceeded to the plantation, as it was called, where some ten or twelve substantial buildings surrounded with a stockade established a very defensible position, but here again neglect and suicidal folly stared him in the face.

The settlers were dispersed in every direction: three had that very morning gone to live among the Indians; many were roaming the woods and shore in search of food; one poor fellow going to dig clams on the previous day had stuck fast in the mud by reason of weakness, and though the Indians stood upon the shore watching him with shouts of derisive laughter, not one put out a hand to help him, and he perished miserably at the flow of the tide.

The master of the *Swan*, stricken with the folly of strong drink, met all Standish's expostulations with a fatuous laugh, and the declaration that there was no danger,—no danger whatever; that he and the Indians were such friends that he carried no arms, and never closed the gates of the stockade; that all the stories reaching Plymouth were lies or blunders; and that although they were short of provisions, and especially of strong waters, they asked nothing more of the Plymouth people than some fresh supplies to last until Sanders, the head of the colony, should return from Monhegan on the coast of Maine, whither he had gone for corn.

Leaving the drunken captain in disgust, Standish at once took the command of the post upon himself, and dispatched Hobomok and two of the settlers who came to place themselves under his orders, to bring in all of the others whom they could reach, sending word that he

would feed them. Many of them, including Sanders' lieutenant named Manning, came at the summons, and before night all who would were safe within the stockade, and were served each man with a pint of shelled corn, all that could be spared, for it was taken from the Pilgrims' stock of seed-corn.

Then in a brief and vigorous address Standish told the colonists why he had come, and repeated to them the assurance given him by Hobomok that the day but one after his arrival was the day fixed upon for the massacre, the boats needing but the one day's work to complete them. Furthermore, he assured them that he needed nor would accept any help from them in his punishment of the savages, the danger and the responsibility being no more than Plymouth could endure, and, as he significantly added, "The savages were not like to flee before men who had so often fled before them."

Hardly was the harangue ended when a Neponset bringing a few hastily collected furs entered the stockade, and warily approaching the captain offered them for sale. Standish controlling all appearance of indignation parleyed with him and paid a fair price for the furs, but as the Indian turned toward one of the houses, he called him back, and dismissed him somewhat peremptorily.

"To spy out the land hath he come," remarked he to Alden. "And I will not have him glean our purpose." But the savage had already learned something, and went back to his comrades to report that The-Sword-of-the-White-Men "spoke smoothly, but his eyes showed that there was anger in his heart."

The second morning so soon as the gates were opened several Indians entered together. One of them named

Pecksuot, a pniese of great celebrity, greeted Hobomok jeeringly, and told him that he supposed his master had come to kill all the Neponsets including himself, and added,—

“Tell him to begin if he dare ; we are not afraid of him, nor shall we run away and hide. Let him begin unless he is afraid. Is he afraid ?”

Hobomok repeated the message word for word, but Standish only replied,—

“Tell the pniese I would speak with his sachem, Obtakiest.”

“Obtakiest is busy, or he is feasting, or he is sleeping,” replied Pecksuot disdainfully. “He does not trouble himself to run about after any little fellow who sends for him.”

Again Hobomok translated the insult, but added in a low voice,—

“Obtakiest is waiting for some of his braves who are gone to the Shawmuts for help. When they return he will attack the white men.”

“So ! Then we will not wait for them, but so soon as we can gather the heads in one place we will return some of their courtly challenges.” And Standish ground his strong teeth together in the pain of self-restraint under insult.

Perceiving that he did not mean to act, some of the Indians who had lingered a little behind at first, now came forward, hopping and dancing around Standish, whetting their knives upon their palms, making insulting gestures, and shouting all sorts of jeers and taunts at him and the white men generally.

Then Wituwamat came forward and in his own tongue cried out,—

“The Captain Sword-of-the-White-Men escaped the knife I carried to Canacum for him, but he will not escape this.” And he showed a dagger hung around his neck by a deer’s sinew, on whose wooden handle a woman’s face was not inartistically carved.

“This is Wituwamat’s squaw-knife,” declared he. “At home he has another with a man’s face upon it which has already killed both French and English; by and by they will marry, and there shall be a knife ready for every white man’s heart; they can see, they can eat, and they make no childish noise like the white man’s weapons. But the squaw knife is enough for the white pniese.”

“Hm! Methinks I cannot much longer keep Gideon in his scabbard—he will fly out of his own accord,” muttered Standish, a deadly pallor showing beneath the bronze of his skin. Pecksuot saw it, and mistook it for the hue of fear. With a savage smile he approached and stood close beside the Captain, towering above his head, for he was a giant in stature and strength.

“The Sword-of-the-White-Men may be a great pniese, but he is a very little man,” said he contemptuously. “Now I am a pniese as well as he, and I am besides a very big man, and a very brave warrior. The Sword had better run away before I devour him.”

Without reply Standish turned and walked into the principal house of the village, and looked around the large lower room.

“It will do as well as another place,” said he briefly. “Alden and Howland remove me this great table to the side of the room, and pitch out this settle and the stools. Now John Alden get you gone and send me Hopkins and Billington. Tarry you with Cooke and Browne at

the gate ; bid Soule and Eaton stand on guard, and if they hear me cry Rescue ! make in to my help. Let no more of the salvages into the stockade until we have settled with these. Hobomok, tell Pecksuot, Kamuso, whom I saw behind the rest, Wituwamat, and that notorious ruffian his brother, that I fain would speak with them in this place."

"Four to four," remarked Billington with grewsome relish.

"Ay. Take you Wituwamat ; Hopkins, I leave you to deal with Kamuso ; Howland, take the young fellow, and I will deal with Pecksuot, for in truth he is a bigger man than I, but we will see if he is a better."

What story Hobomok may have invented to bring the four ringleaders into the house we know not, but as five white men remained outside with at least an equal number of Indians, they could not fear being overmatched, and presently came stalking impudently in, exchanging jeers and laughter of the most irritating nature.

Hobomok followed, and closing the door stood with his back against it, calmly observing the scene, but taking no part in it.

Then at last the captain loosed the reins of the fiery spirit struggling and chafing beneath the curb so long, and fixing his eyes red with the blaze of anger upon Pecksuot, he cried, —

"On guard, O Pecksuot !" and sprang upon him, seizing the squaw-knife, which was sharpened at the back as well as at the front, and ground at the tip to a needle point. With a coarse laugh Pecknot snatched at the captain's throat with his left hand, while his right closed like iron over the captain's grasp of the hilt and tried to turn it against him. But the rebound from

his forced inaction had strung the soldier's muscles like steel and thrilled along his nerves like fire. A roar like that of a lion broke from his panting chest, and with one mighty effort he wrung the knife from the grasp of the giant, and turning its point drove it deep into the heart of the boaster. A wild cry of death and defeat rung through the room as he fell headlong, and Wituwamat turning his head to look, gave Billington his chance and received his own mortal wound; while Kamuso fighting with the silent courage of a great warrior only succumbed at last beneath a dozen wounds from Hopkins's short sword, and Howland having disarmed and wounded his opponent presented him as prisoner under Standish's orders.

"Should'st have slain him in the heat of the onset, Howland," panted the captain, wiping his hands and looking around him. "Now — take him out, Billington, and hang him to the tree in the middle of the parade. We shall leave him there as an example for the others. Open the door, Hobomok."

Hobomok did as he was bid, but then advancing with slow step to the side of the fallen Pecksuot he placed a foot upon his chest and softly said, —

"Yes, my brother, thou wast a very big man, but I have seen a little man bring thee low."

It was the giant's funeral elegy.

"I have notched my sword on yon villain's skull," exclaimed Hopkins wiping and examining his blade, and the Captain smiling shrewdly said, —

"I risked not Gideon in such ignoble warfare, though he clattered in his scabbord. Savage weapons for savage hearts, say I."

"Ha! There's fighting without!" cried Hopkins,

rushing to the door, where in effect Soule and Browne had shot down two stout savages, who hearing Pecksuot's death cry had tried to avenge him ; while another rushing upon Alden with uplifted knife was caught in mid career by a bullet from the captain's snap-hance snatched up at Hopkins's warning.

So fell seven of the savages, who would if they could have barbarously murdered seventy white men, women, and children, and thus did the Captain of the Pilgrim forces teach the red men a lesson that lasted in vivid force until the men of that generation had given way to those of poor weak Sachem Philip's day.

That night one of the three colonists who had gone to live among the Indians returned to the village bringing news that in the evening a runner had arrived at the place where he was, and had delivered a "short and sad" message to his hosts, probably the news of Pecksuot's and Wituwamat's death. The Indians had begun at once to collect and arm, and the foreboding evil had slunk away after vainly trying to persuade his comrades to do the same.

"They will be slain out of revenge," declared Hobomok in his own tongue, and the event proved him a true prophet.

In the early gray of morning the watch reported a file of Indians emerging from the forest, and Standish with four of his own men, and two settlers who implored permission to join him, went to meet them. A bushy hillock lay midway between the two parties, and the Indians were making for its shelter, when the Pilgrims breaking into a double run forestalled them, and reached the summit where, as Standish declared, he was ready to welcome the whole Neponset tribe.

The Indians at once fell behind each man his tree, and a flight of arrows aimed chiefly at Standish and Hobomok ensued.

“Let no man shoot until he hath a fair mark,” ordered the Captain. “Tis useless to waste ammunition upon tree-trunks.”

“Both their pnieses are dead, and Obtakiest himself is none!” suddenly declared Hobomok. “I alone can drive them!” and throwing off his coat, leaving his chest with its gleaming “totem” bare, he extended wide his arms and rushed down the hill shouting at the top of his voice,—

“Hobomok the pniese! Hobomok the devil! Hobomok is awake! Hobomok has come!”

“The fool will be shot! Hath he gone mad!” shouted Billington, but Hopkins grasped his arm.

“Let be, let be! He knows what he is about. Himself told me that his name Hobomok answereth to our word Devil, and that while every pniese through fasting and self-torture gains much power over demons and is greatly feared by all who are not pnieses, he having taken the foul fiend’s name, had gained double the power of the rest, and could when put to it summon Sathanas and all his brood to aid him. Those others know it, and — lo, you now, see them scatter, see them fly!” and with a loud laugh he pointed to the savage crew, who panic stricken were fleeing before the pniese like a flock of frightened sheep.

“Have after them! Follow me, men!” shouted Standish rushing down the hill, the others following as fast as they could, but not fast enough, for before they came within shot, the party was halted by Hobomok’s return, who half glorious, half laughing, reported the enemy hidden in a swamp, whither he led his friends.

"We will slay no more if we can help it," declared the captain. "Alden, show a flag of truce. Happily they will understand it."

But although as Standish drew near the thicket, Alden carrying the white flag beside him, the savages refrained from firing, his invitation to parley was received with a volley of abuse and defiance renewed at every attempt of his to speak.

"Obtakiest is there. I know his voice," declared Hobomok who had crept up behind. "He will not show himself lest I curse him."

"Obtakiest! Sachem! Art thou there?" demanded Standish. "Come forth then like a man, and we two will fight it out here in the midst. I challenge thee, sachem!"

A hoarse laugh and a volley of obscene abuse was the reply, and Standish indignantly cried, —

"Dost not know how base and cowardly it is to hide there and tongue it like an angry woman! Thou 'rt not fit to be called a man!"

A shower of arrows was the only response to this, and presently the movement of the bushes showed that the Indians were retreating to a deeper fastness, and Standish deeply disgusted marched his own men back to the village, the only casualty on either side being the broken arm of the powah or priest, who with Wituwamat and Pecksuot were really the heart of the conspiracy; for Obtakiest after a while sent a squaw to Plymouth abjectly begging for peace, and declaring that he had since Standish's visit changed his camp every night for fear of receiving another one.

"And now, Master Manning, and you, master of the Swan and friend of the Neponsets," demanded Standish,

as he arrayed the Weymouth men before him, and declared his success in their quarrel, "what shall I do more for your comfort or safety before my return to Plymouth? For myself, I should never fear to remain in this plantation had I the half of your men, but for yourselves ye must judge. Only I will add that I am charged by Governor Bradford to say that any who will come to settle in Plymouth and abide by its laws and governance shall be kindly welcomed."

The settlers debated the matter among themselves for a while, and although a few and those of the best, decided to accept the invitation to Plymouth albeit somewhat coldly given, the majority decided to desert the post where they had suffered so much, and to join some other of Weston's men at Monhegan. The Pilgrims cheerfully lent their help, and before night the settlers had loaded all their portable property into the Swan, Standish had seen the gates of the stockade securely bolted and barred, and Hobomok with some red paint had traced upon each a hideous emblem, which he assured the white men would frighten away any predatory Indian.

Standish only laughed, but Hopkins nodded sagely.

"The rogue is right—I know the symbol, and have seen the terror it carries," said he; and true it is that whether from superstitious or from martial terrors, that stockade and the houses it enclosed, and the body of the savage left swinging from the tree in their midst, were never molested or apparently visited by the red men again. As the heavy laden Swan weltered out of the harbor, victualed with all that remained of Standish's seed corn except a scanty ration apiece to his own men, the pinnace bore gallantly up for Plymouth, and in due

*Hobomok . . . had traced upon each a
hideous emblem*



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course joyfully arrived there bringing home all her crew victorious and unscathed.

With them came Wituwamat's head to be set on a pike over the gateway of the Fort, for these our Fathers were not of our day or thought in such matters; and these Englishmen did but follow the usage of England, when so lately as 1747 the heads of the unhappy Pretender's more unhappy followers defiled the air of London's busiest street.

Standish for one never doubted of the justice of his course either in the slaying of the colony's avowed enemies, or the exposure of the ringleader's head; not even when a year or so later Bradford sorrowfully placed in his hands a letter just received from his revered Pastor Robinson at Leyden, who in commenting on the death of the Indians said, —

“ Oh how happy a thing it had been had you converted some before you had killed any. Let me be bold to exhort you seriously to consider of the disposition of your captain, whom I love; — but there is cause to fear that by occasion, especially of provocation, there may be wanting in him that tenderness of the life of man made after God's image, that is meet.”

Standish read the letter, and returning it without a word went out from his friend's presence, nor did he ever after allude to it, but a blow had been struck upon that loyal loving heart from which it never in this life recovered.

Thirty years later as the hero set his house in order, his failing hand wrote these words, —

“ I give 3£. to Mercy Robinson whom I tenderly love for her grandfather's sake.”

And that was his revenge.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE WOLF AT THE DOOR.

MIDSUMMER was upon the land, and the heat and drought were intense. Day after day the sun rose fierce and pitiless, drinking up at a draught what scanty dews had distilled in a night so brief and heated that it brought no refreshment to herbage or to man. Day after day wistful eyes searched the horizon for a cloud if no bigger than a man's hand, and still only the hard blue above and the palpitating horizon line stared blankly back. The crops languished in the field, some already dead, and the scanty store saved from the seed corn quite gone. Many a day a few clams, a lobster, or a piece of fish without bread or any vegetable, was a family's whole subsistence.

Early in July the ship *Plantation* had touched at Plymouth having on board two hogsheads of dried peas for sale, but seeing the bitter need of the colonists the shipmaster raised the price to £8 per hogshead, and although they had the money, the Fathers refused to submit to the extortion, and the peas sailed southward.

It is but forty miles from Plymouth to Boston Harbor, where about a hundred and fifty years later the women signed a declaration that they would forego the use of tea rather than submit to extortion, and their fathers and husbands and lovers flung a goodly cargo into the sea.

But a stout spirit although it keeps a man up puts no flesh on his bones, and soon it became a piteous sight to stand in the Town Square and mark the faces and figures of those who passed by. Strong men staggered from weakness as they walked, women glided along like mournful white wraiths, even the little children in their quaint garb looked worn and emaciated. Standish, who relying upon his iron constitution and long training in a soldier's endurance, had regularly divided his rations with some woman or child, had grown so gaunt and worn that he might well have posed as The Skeleton in Armor, when he held his monthly muster, and Mistress Brewster, although some private provision was made for her, wasted away piteously.

“Where is the ship spoken by the master of the Plantation ?” was the daily cry, and daily Hobomok climbed the great tulip-tree on the crest of Watson’s Hill and swept the horizon line with eyes keener than any white man’s.

“The Lord abaseth us for our sins,” declared the elder. “Call a solemn assembly, proclaim a fast, let us entreat our God to have mercy, and our Lord to pardon. Who can tell but He yet may turn and have compassion, and spare the remnant of His people. Even as a servant looketh to the hand of his master even so let us wait upon our God, beseeching that He spare, that He pardon, that He restore us, who for our sins are appointed to die.”

So spake the elder after the evening prayers of a day even more exhausting than its predecessors, and Myles Standish, leaning against the wall for very weakness, muttered,—

“Nay, what sin have these women and children

wrought? What odds between a God like that and the Shietan of the salvages? Nay, Elder, thou hast not bettered the faith my mother lived and died by."

But the fast was appointed for the next day, which fell on a Thursday, and as the sun sprang up with even an added blaze of pitiless heat, he saw a mournful procession winding up the hill to the Fort, now so completed as to offer a large lower room for purposes of devotion or of refuge, while the ordnance mounted on the roof gained a wider range, and presented a more formidable aspect.

At the head walked Elder Brewster, but the shadowy form of Mary his wife reclined in the old chair set beside the window, whence she could watch the procession she was unable to join except in spirit. Then came the Governor and the Captain, Allerton and Winslow, Warren and Fuller, Hopkins and Howland, Alden and Browne, and the rest of the glorious band, the least of whom has his name written in the *Libro d' Oro* of the men posterity delighteth to honor. After the men came the women, meek and gentle, yet strong and courageous, and the children, poor little heroes and heroines, involuntary martyrs like the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem.

"Get thee to the roof, Hobomok," ordered the captain, "and say the prayers the elder hath so painfully taught thee; but mind me, lad, keep thine eyes upon the horizon and watch for the answer, whether it be a sail, or whether it be a rain cloud. Shalt play the part of Elijah's servant, and the elder is the very moral of the stern old prophet."

No morsel of food, no drop of drink, had passed the lips of that wan company since the pittance of the night before, and yet for nine long hours of that fearful day,

the air so heated that it hardly fed the lungs, and the sun blazing so pitilessly upon the log structure that a faint odor of parching wood mingled with the torrid air within the Fort, yes, for nine long hours the elder prayed, or preached, or recited aloud the deep abasement of the penitential psalms, and the wail of the prophets, proclaiming, yet deprecating, the wrath of an offended God.

In the intervals others spoke; Doctor Fuller, himself a deacon in the church, and Bradford, whose petition less abject than that of the elder, called confidently for help, upon Him who twice fed a starving multitude, who promised that no petition in His name should go unanswered, who hungering in the wilderness knew the extremity of famine, who cried aloud, I Thirst, who has promised to be with His own in all time till Time shall be no more.

Standish, like the statue of a sentinel in bronze, stood at the door leaning upon his snaphance, listening intently to all, and breathing a deep-throated Amen to the governor's prayer.

Noon blazed overhead, and Priscilla, ah, poor white, attenuate Priscilla, crept down the hill to the elder's house, and gathering a handful of fire-wood warmed some broth made from a rabbit snared by Alden the day before, and silently brought a cup to the mother, who drank it with the tears brimming over her patient, faded eyes.

"I am not worthy to fast with the rest of you. I am an unprofitable servant," whispered she handing back the cup and covering her face.

"Oh, mother, mother, do not break my heart," cried the girl, whom the smell of food had turned sick and

faint. "It is not so, dear saint. The Lord will not have thee fast because He knows thou art already perfected"—

"Hush, hush, my child; thy words are both wild and wicked. Get thee back to the House of Prayer, and beg our God to forgive thy sin of presumption. Fare thee well—nay, one moment,—doth,—doth the elder look sadly spent?—he is not over strong—and Jonathan? Didst mark him and the boys? Wrestling is but puny."

"They are all in such strength as can be looked for, mother dear, and will hold out as well as any." And Priscilla wanly smiled in the poor pinched face, adjusted the cushions and the foot-rest, and without so much as a drop of cold water for herself, wearily climbed the hill. The captain making room for her to pass looked with anxious sympathy into her face, but spake no word, and again the withering hours passed on, and the elder prayed in a husky and broken whisper, and his hearers muttered an Amen, hollow and mournful as the echo from an open tomb.

Three o'clock, and Hobomok scrambled down from the roof, and stood in the open doorway. His master saw and went out to him. In a moment he came again, and passing between the banks of rude benches stood before the elder, who, pausing suddenly, fixed upon him a gaze of piteous inquiry, while a little movement among the hundred starving souls watching and praying heralded his news.

"The answer has come, Elder," announced the soldier briefly. "A full rigged ship has just cleared Manomet headland, and a cloud black with rain is rolling up out of the Southwest."

“Let us pray!” said the elder softly; and Standish bowed his head with the rest as the holy man, his voice strong and fervent once more, poured out for himself and his people such gratitude as perhaps is only possible from those “appointed to die,” and suddenly rescued by the hand of a merciful Father.

A few moments later, as the procession wound down the hill, somewhat less formally than it had gone up, the southern and western sky were black with clouds already veiling the sun, and within an hour a soft and tender rain began to fall, soaking quietly into the earth gaping all over with the wounds of drought, and reviving, as Bradford quaintly phrased it, both their drooping affections and their withered corn.

“The white man’s God is better than the red man’s,” remarked Hobomok privately to Wanalandet, who was visiting Plymouth. “When our powahs pray for rain, and cut themselves, and offer sacrifice, it comes sometimes, but in noisy floods that tear up the earth, and beat down the maize, and do more harm than good. Wanalandet better turn praying Indian like Hobomok.”

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BRIDES' SHIP.

THE rain proved as persistent as it was gentle, and under its influence the wind sighed itself asleep, leaving at sunset the ship espied by Hobomok becalmed outside Beach Point. Some of the Pilgrims would have rowed out to her, but Bradford knew from his own feelings how unfit they were for such heavy labor.

"A little patience should not be hard for men who have patiently waited so long," said he smiling. "Let us all break our fast with thanksgiving."

"One more cup of broth and a bit of the hare," said Priscilla gayly, as she set a little table beside her precious invalid. "And to-morrow I doubt not but I can offer you a posset of white flour and sugar and spice and all sorts of comfortable things. Whatever the ship may be 't is sure to have the making of a posset in her."

"Oh Priscilla, dear maid, if it might be, — if I dared think of my two girls" —

The trembling voice gave way, and for a moment Priscilla could not speak. Then she cheerily said, —

"If not themselves there is sure to be news of them, and God is very good. Pr'ythee take the broth."

"There then, good child. Now go to thine own supper. Mary is placing it upon the board."

Dropping a light kiss upon the face lovingly upturned, Priscilla passed into the outer room where upon the great table standing to-day in Pilgrim Hall rested a

wooden bowl filled with boiled clams, and beside it a dish of coarse salt and a pewter flagon of water. Only this, no bread, no vegetable, no after course ; but at the head of the table stood the elder, his worn face radiant with gratitude, as, uplifting his voice, he gave thanks to God for that he and his might "suck of the abundance of the seas and of the treasures hid in the sand."

After midnight a breeze sprung up, but the master of the Anne cautiously waited for the full tide to float him over the many flats then as now obstructing Plymouth Harbor, and it was not until another sunrise that the travel-worn and over-crowded bark folded her patched sails and dropped her anchor not far from the old anchorage ground of the Mayflower.

The governor no longer tried to restrain the enthusiasm of his townsmen ; in fact, he himself helped to drag up the anchor of the pinnace and make her ready for a visit to the stranger. With him went Jonathan Brewster to see if perchance his sisters might be on board ; and Doctor Fuller, and Robert Hicks, and Francis Cooke, and William Palmer, and Master Warren, albeit not fit even for so small an exertion, for every one of these men thought it possible that his wife might be aboard, nor was one of them disappointed, for the Anne, might well have dropped her anchor to the tune of "Sweethearts and Wives," so laden was she with those precious commodities.

"Come Captain !" called Bradford as the dory lay ready to transport the last three to the pinnace already under sail.

"No," somewhat morosely returned Standish. "I shall only be in the way of other men's rejoicings. There's naught for me aboard that or any other ship that floats. No, I say, — push off, Cooke ! "

And the captain strode up the hill, and climbed the roof of the Fort to cover and pet his big guns and see that the dampness did them no mischief.

Below, Alden helped Priscilla to make ready all the food remaining in the village, for surely the new-comer had brought supplies, and the famine was at an end.

“If this ship might bring him a wife as perchance it hath to our good surgeon,” said John after describing his master’s mood.

“Ay, but I fear me he’ll be hard to suit,” replied Priscilla.

“Nathless, remember sweetheart, you promised me that so soon as the famine was over and our new house finished” —

“And the captain cheerful as his wont.”

“Ay, well so soon as all these matters were settled fairly, you promised” —

“Oh sooth, good lad, stand not gaping there and minding me of last winter’s snow and last summer’s roses! Go and call the captain and the elder to their breakfast while I see to the dear mother.”

But breakfast was hardly over when Mistress Winslow ran across the street to the elder’s wife.

“Lo you now, dear mother,” cried she excitedly. “There are three boats rowing toward the Rock, and in every one of them you may make out women’s gear, and who knows but Patience and Fear are of the company. All the men have gone down to the Rock, and I am going.”

Out she ran again, and Priscilla quickly moved to the mother’s side, but great joys do not kill even though they startle, and presently the white white face was raised with a smile almost of heaven illuminating it, and the dame softly said, —

“Yes, they have come. I knew it in the night. They have come, but Priscilla thou 'rt none the less my dear and dutious daughter. Now get you to the Rock with the rest. I shall be well alone.”

“Now is Will Bradford well content; now is comedy ready to tread upon the heels of tragedy, and funeral dirges to end in marriage chimes,” muttered the captain as he plunged down the steep of Leyden Street, and stood with overcast face and compressed lips watching the boats sweeping merrily up to the landing.

In the foremost sat the governor, and close beside him two female figures their backs to the shore. On the next thwart Surgeon Fuller, his whimsical face for once honestly glad, leaned an elbow on his knee and peered up into the comely face of Bridget, his young wife, for Agnes Carpenter lay asleep beneath St. Peter's Church in old Leyden town. But her sister Juliana had come with her husband, George Morton, and their five children, Patience already a winsome lass of fifteen, soon to marry John Faunce and become mother of the last ruling Elder of Plymouth Church.

Later on, two more of these fair Carpenter girls were to come over to the home of their sister Alice: Priscilla, who married William Wright, one of the joyous passengers of the Fortune; and Mary, of whom the Chronicles say that she died “a godly old maid” in her sister's home.

Pardon the interlude, but there is something very fascinating in the story of this family of five beautiful girls so eagerly sought in marriage by the best men of the colony, and of her who was the flower of all and yet died “a godly old maid.”

The governor's boat was at the Rock, and willing

hands on shore caught at the rope thrown from the bows, and dragged her up so that the passengers could step out dry shod. Standish drew back a little, and with folded arms stood watching the debarkation. Last of all came Bradford and the two ladies he had escorted.

“So that is Mistress Alice Carpenter Southworth, is it,” muttered the soldier grasping a handful of his ruddy beard. “Well, it is a winsome dame and a gentle; I wonder not that Will hath” —

But the calm comment ended abruptly in an exclamation of incredulity and pleasure, for when Mistress Southworth stood safely upon the strand, Bradford turned and gave his hand to her companion, a girl of some four or five and twenty years old, with one of those rounded and supple figures which combine strength and delicacy, endurance and elasticity, and are very slow in yielding to the attacks of Time. A demure hood tied under the chin framed a round face, whose firm fair skin had defied the tarnish of the sea, and only gained a somewhat warmer glow in cheek and lip than its native tone. Little tendrils of sunny brown hair pushed their laughing way from beneath the edge of the hood and curled joyously to the fingers of the toying wind. Straight dark brows and long eyelashes of the same deep tint gave character to the face, and shaded a pair of eyes whose beauty has stamped itself upon every generation of this woman’s descendants. Large, and peculiarly opened, these eyes were of a clear violet blue, but with pupils whose frequent dilatation gave such range of tint and expression, and such extraordinary brilliancy that many were found to insist that the eyes themselves were black, while others vowed that no such intensity

of blue had ever been seen in human orbs before. But neither in the shape, nor the color, nor the brilliancy, nor the pathetic curve of the upper lid, did the wonderful beauty of these eyes abide ; it was a fascination, a compelling power in their regard ; the power of appeal or of assurance, of love or wrath, of promise or of trust, that dwelt in their depths, and leaped or stole thence bending to their service the will of all who gazed steadfastly upon them. Weapons more dangerous in a woman's hands than was Gideon the Sword, in the hands of the Captain of Plymouth.

As their owner lightly leaping from the gunwale of the boat alighted upon the Rock, these eyes sought and rested merrily upon Myles' wonder-stricken face, while a joyous smile illuminated the features and showed bright and pretty teeth.

“Barbara!” exclaimed the captain, leaping down from the hillock where he had so unsympathetically posted himself to observe the landing.

“Yes, Barbara,” returned a blithe voice. “Come all this way to look after her cousin, who cared not to come so far as the ship to greet her.”

“But how was I to know thou wert coming, lass? Ever and always at thine old trick of laying me in some blunder! Well, thou 'rt welcome, Bab, welcome as flowers in May.” And seizing the round face between his two hands Myles pressed a hearty salute upon either cheek.

“And Captain,” broke in Bradford's well pleased voice, “let me bring you to the notice of Mistress Southworth, in whose matronly company your cousin has journeyed.”

A fair and gentle English face, albeit not without a

quiet determination in its lines, was turned upon the soldier as Alice Southworth held out her hand saying,—

“And greatly behoden am I to Mistress Standish for her companionship. I know not quite how we could have borne some of our discomfiture had not she cheered and upheld us as she did.”

“Ay, ‘tis a way the wench hath of old,” replied the captain gayly. “I mind me of a home across the seas where one declared that naught but Barbara’s care kept her in life at all. But in good sooth, girl, why didst not warn me of thy coming?”

“I would fain take thee by surprise, cousin, and methinks I have.”

“A total, an utter surprise.”

“We had fared but ill here in the colony had yon sachem surprised thee as effectually, Myles,” laughed the governor as the little party climbed The Street, a long procession of jocund men, women, and children streaming after them, the joy of reunion and the flood of loving greetings sweeping away the conventional barriers wherein the Separatists attempted to imprison Nature.

“Ah! There are the elder’s girls!” said Bradford, as they halted before his gate and looked back upon the busy street.

“Yes, Fear and Patience, sweet maids both of them,” replied Alice.

“And those five merry Warren girls have found their father,” said Barbara. “But he looks not over strong.”

“No,” replied the governor sadly. “He hath not grudged both to spend and to be spent for the common weal, and glad am I that his wife hath come to restrain his zeal. But come in, come in, dear friends, and Mis-

tress Eaton, who cares for me and my house until I can purvey me another housekeeper, will make you welcome."

"I would not say nay to some breakfast, nor I think would you, maid Barbara, eh?" laughed Alice, and the governor's face clouded.

"I fear me there is but sorry cheer to set before you, dear friends," said he. "Mistress Eaton warned me last night that a few clams were all she had, or could compass, in her larder."

"Something was told aboard of a famine in the place," said Barbara quietly, "and I fancied it could do no harm to put some provant left over of my stores into a bag and carry it ashore. If none wanted it I could leave it hid, and — but here it is — the bag, Myles?"

"What, this sack I have tugged up the hill? All this, provision?"

"Ay, for the cook gave me a good bit of boiled beef, and a hen to boot."

"Beef!" exclaimed the captain involuntarily, but in a tone of such amazed delight that Barbara's eyes dwelt upon him in pity and wonder.

"Myles! Thou dost not mean that thou hast been actually a-hungered!" said she. "Oh Alice, they are starving."

"Starving!" echoed Alice in the same tone of dismay. "Oh Will!"

"Nay, nay, nay!" protested the governor with a somewhat hollow laugh. "We have not feasted of late, perhaps, and the word beef hath a strange sound in our ears, since no meat save a little wild game hath been seen among us for a year or more, but still, thank God, we are well and hearty" —

“Well and hearty!” repeated Alice Southworth. “Look at him, Barbara; look at his cheeks, his temples, look at that hand, all as one with the skeleton in the museum of Leyden. Oh Barbara, to think that we should find them starving after all!”

“Better starving than starved,” replied Barbara calmly. “And if the governor will give me warrant, and this same Mistress Eaton will lend me her aid, I will soon set forth a table that shall make hungry men’s hearts leap within them.”

“There, Will,” exclaimed Alice generously. “That is the sort of maid she is, never stopping to lament and wring her hands as silly I do, but ever looking for the way to mend the evil, and finding it, too.”

Dame Eaton, whom we have known as Lois, maid to Mistress Carver, but now married to Francis Eaton and promoted on her marriage to be the governor’s house-keeper, soon made her appearance, and the three women were not long in setting forth a breakfast whereunto the governor invited as many of his neighbors as the table could accommodate, and over which he offered a thanksgiving, glowing with loving gratitude to Him who giveth all.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MARRIAGE BELLS.

“AND now, Governor, we have to billet all these new-comers as best we may. Six-and-ninety names the captain of the Anne reports on his roster, and that fairly doubles the population of Plymouth. Where shall we bestow them all?”

“Why, Captain, you know that many of our men expecting their wives and children have built housen and now will occupy them; and for the rest, I am minded, if you will have me, to impose myself upon you and Alden, and leave mine own house to Mistress Southworth and your cousin. Then, as the elder’s daughters now have come, Priscilla Molines, whom my dame knoweth and loveth well, and Mary Chilton and Elizabeth Tilley can all find room here also, and the rest we will dispose of among the other families. Mayhap for a while the young men may sleep at the Fort.”

“Nay, Governor, we ’ll have no rantipoles at the Fort meddling and making among the ammunition, and playing tricks with the guns. Alden and you and I and Howland, and some other of the ancients, will swing our hammocks at the Fort if you will, and my house may be turned into a billet for the bachelors, until we can help them to knock up housen for themselves.”

“So be it, comrade, and yet ’t is hardly worth while to make great changes or fatigues until”—

“Until?”—

“Until some among us are wed, Myles.”

“Why, truly yes. I had forgot, and yet I have heard the jingle of marriage bells in thy voice since ever yon ship rounded Manomet. How soon will it be, Will?”

“So soon as my dame agreeth,” replied Bradford contentedly. “At all odds before the Anne returneth. We have magistrates enow among us, however, for Master Oldham and Master Hatherly both carry the king’s patent as justices; and this Master Lyford who cometh in Oldham’s train is preacher in the Church of England.”

“Ha! Say you so, Will? One of the ‘hireling priests’ of such noisome odour in the nostrils of thy friends of the stricter sort at Leyden!”

“Nay, Captain, but you will remember that Pastor Robinson did receive members of England’s Church to the Lord’s Table, and did counsel us to live in brotherly love and communion with them.”

“And so fell into disfavor with his old friends the Brownists,” remarked Standish carelessly. “Well, ‘tis all one to me, who am no church member, and deny not due respect to the old faith of mine house. And you will be wed anon, Will?”

“Ay, and we will have your Barbara to stay with us until she finds another home, if you and she consent. Dame Alice loves her passing well.”

“‘T is a good wench and a comfortable one,” replied Standish well pleased. “Had Rose lived, or had Priscilla said me yea, I had taken Barbara under mine own roof; but now I must wait until she makes her choice of the swains that soon will come a-wooing, and then she and her husband shall come to me.”

“Ay,” returned Bradford musingly, and checking

upon his lips the smile that danced in his eyes. "Thy plans are ever wisely laid, Myles."

Turning into his own house Bradford found Alice with her wimple and scarf on just about to leave it.

"Whither away, mistress?" asked he gayly.

"Only to breathe a mouthful of fresh air, Master Governor. I have been so long a shipboard that four walls seem a prison to me. Mayhap I'll take passage back again with good Master Pierce."

"Mayhap thou 'lt do naught of the sort. I have thee now, and I'll not let thee go, as I did sometime in Leyden."

"Thou didst anger me sore, Will, when thou 'dst not close with that good man's offer of half his business, though it was but a merchant's. And my father crying up Edward Southworth" —

"Nay, Alice, we 'll not go pulling open old wounds to see if they be healed. I would not, I could not do violence to my English name and blood and become a Dutch trader though it were to gain thy hand, nor did I think thou wouldst in thine anger go so far — but there, sweetheart, we 'll say no more on 't, now or ever. God has been exceeding gracious in bringing us once more together, and we will not be ungrateful. Thy boys shall find a father in me, Alice, and should Elder May give me again my little John" —

"Nay, the boy is well with his grandsire in Leyden, and my Constant and Thomas must abide with their father's folk for a while. They would not part from me unless I left the boys for a year or two."

"And still thou wouldst come, Alice."

"Dost mind what words Ruth said to Naomi, Will?"

"Truly do I, Alice."

And as the two long-parted lovers looked deep into each other's eyes there needed no further speech to show that the long winter was over and the time of the singing of birds had come.

Two weeks from the arrival of the *Anne* all Plymouth put on festal gear and merry faces. Good cheer abounded in place of famine, for the new-comers were well stored with provision, and although this was not turned into the common stock, those who had promising crops—and since the Fast Day there had been no stint of rain, and the corn promised marvelously well—could always obtain dry provisions for the promise of a share in the green meat when it should be gathered.

And fitting it was that Plymouth should keep holiday, for not only was it the governor's marriage morn, but Priscilla Molines, whom all her townsfolk loved, was to become John Alden's wife; and as the two friends could not be parted, Mary Chilton had promised upon the day of Priscilla's marriage to give her hand to John Winslow, one of the Fortune's pilgrims and brother of Edward and Gilbert. Finally John Howland so strongly pleaded his cause before the elder and his wife that they consented to give him Elizabeth Tilley to wife, young though she was, and to allow him to take her to the pretty cottage he had built upon The Street, next to Stephen Hopkins's substantial house on the corner of The Street and the King's Highway. John Alden also had built a cottage between the captain's house and the governor's; and Eaton with his wife Lois was to share a house with Peter Browne, who had manfully assumed the charge of Widow Martha Ford and her three children.

Christian Penn, a stalwart lass, passenger of the *Anne*, was to make one of the governor's family, and

literally to be "help" to his wife in the duties of the household, while Mary Becket consented to fill the same place in Edward Winslow's home.

Barbara, cordially invited both by Alice Southworth and by Priscilla to become their perpetual guest, laughingly accepted both invitations, saying to Priscilla,—

"When I find too much pepper in thy soup, Pris, I'll e'en go cool my tongue with Dame Alice's comfitures; and when I fancy one new-wed pair were as content without me, I 'll e'en go and inflict myself upon t' other."

"And the captain will keep house with only Hobomok," said Priscilla dubiously.

"Nay, Kit Conant is to 'bide with them, and do certain service, and I shall still be in and out," said Barbara briskly. "Like enough the most they eat will be of my brewing. We shall do well enow for the captain. But, Priscilla, what ailed thee not to wed him, since his comfort sits so nigh thy heart?"

"Why, 't is but Christian to pity them who are in need, yet none can wed with more than one man at a time, and from the first I knew that John Alden was the one for me. Wed him thyself, Barbara, and send Kit Conant about his business."

A sudden color surged all over Barbara's face, and the wonderful eyes shot out an angry spark, but after a moment she quietly said,—

"Myles and I have ever been more like brother and sister than cousins. His mother was all as one with mine own."

"Ay, and so it is. Yes, yes, I see," said Priscilla hurriedly, but when Barbara had left her she stood for many minutes drumming on the table, and thoughtfully

gazing through the open door at the blue wonder of the sea.

And now the wedding day had come, a glorious golden summer day, and some of the older folk, whose habits of early life held rigidly to the soil since planted anew to a Separatist crop, remembered that it was Lammas Day. One of these was Elizabeth, Master Warren's new-come wife, and as she looked abroad in the early morning, she sighed a bit and said, —

“A year agone, Richard, I looked upon another guess sort of scene than this. The church bells were ringing and the people trooping in, and many was the goodwife who brought her loaf baked of the first-fruit wheat to offer it for the parson's table if not for the Communion” —

“Nay wife, nay, remember Lot's wife,” chided the husband, already so far upon his way to that abode of Light where shall be no Separatism and no uncharity.

As all the world would fain be present at one or the other of the four marriages, it was concluded that they should be held in the open air, and the captain with much enthusiasm directed the spreading of an open tent, or, more properly, a canopy upon the greensward stretching across the King's Highway from Bradford's house to Hopkins's.

This completed, and the military band paraded ready to salute the governor upon his arrival, Standish stood aside, wiping his brow, and looking jovially about him at the tables already spread with the wedding feast, which was thrifitly to take the place of the villagers' ordinary dinner.

“A cheerful and a refreshing season, Captain,” said a staid voice at his elbow.

“ Ay,” replied Standish briefly and with something of the good-humor gone from his face, for he had no great love for Isaac Allerton, Assistant of the Governor, and one of the principal men of the colony, though he was.

“ Methinks you and I might be principals instead of spectators at some such solemnity, and offend no law of God or man.”

“ I know no law against your being wed if it pleases you, Master Allerton,” replied the soldier briefly.

“ No — no, as you justly say, no law, Captain, and truth to tell I had it in my mind to speak to you this morning” —

“ To me, to me ! ” exclaimed the captain, wheeling round and staring at the smooth face and narrow figure of the assistant. “ Dost fancy that I am a pretty maid hid within a buff jerkin ? ”

“ Ha ! ha ! Our good captain still must have his joke. Nay then, in sober earnest my dear brother, your cousin, Mistress Barbara Standish, doth much commend herself to my mind as a discreet and godly maiden, notable in household ways, and of a mild and biddable nature. I fain would have her to wife, Standish, if I may do so with your consent.”

“ Nay now, Master Allerton, your eyes are keener after a good chance for trucking than ever a pair in the colony, and I’m not saying that the governor could find a better assistant in his weighty affairs of State, but you’ve no more eye for a gentlewoman’s good qualities than I have for a peddler’s. ‘ Mild and biddable,’ forsooth ! Those virtues were left out when they brewed the Standish blood, Master Allerton, and courage and honor and some other trifles thrown in to make amends. Why man, should you wed Barbara Standish and raise

a hand upon her as I 've seen you do upon your daughters, woman-grown, I 'd not answer but she 'd have your life's blood for it ; and if you bade her stint the measure of the corn she sold to your neighbors, she 'd quit your roof and you, before you could say whiskerando ! No, no, Master Allerton, best not try to mate yourself with a Standish. No luck would come on 't I promise you."

"Methinks, Captain Standish," replied the councilor smoothly, although his pale face had taken a livid cast harmonizing with a green light in his narrow eyes,— "methinks you take over much upon yourself in this our land of liberty and God-given rights. Why should you decide so absolutely for Mistress Standish? Why may not she speak her own mind. She at least has no narrow and ignorant prejudice against me, unless indeed you have already instilled it into her mind."

"Nay now, Allerton, dost in sober sadness suppose that in meeting my kinswoman after a five years' parting I chose you as my theme of discourse ? As for the rest, I lay no constraint upon Mistress Standish. Speak to her if you will and as soon as you will, but tell her all the story, tell her of your grown children, and of your years"—

"They are no more than yours," sharply interrupted the councilor.

"Did I say they were ? Well, speak to her I say — ha, here come the brides. Now trumpets!"

And as the trumpets blew a joyous fanfare and the drums and fife burst forth in a blithe jargon intended for the good old tune of *Haste to the Wedding*, out from the door of the governor's house came Bradford leading Alice Southworth, fair and delicate and sweet, yet with a little air of state about her, as one who had already

known the honors of matronhood and now was called to become the wife of a ruler. Next came Priscilla, dressed in a fair white gown trimmed with old Flemish lace at which Mistress Winslow looked askance, her rich color a little subdued, and a somewhat tremulous curve to her ripe lips, while the great brown eyes were filled with a dreamy haze not far from tears. She was wedding the man of her love, but she stood all alone beside him, this brave yet tender-hearted Priscilla of ours, — she stood alone, and she thought of her mother, the mother so loved, so mourned, so near to that faithful heart to-day.

Then came well-born, well-nurtured John Winslow and Mary Chilton, the fair English May whose sweet blossoms are ever upheld by such a sturdy and healthy stock, ay, and are protected by substantial thorns from meddling fingers even while its fragrance is graciously shed abroad for all the world to glory in.

And last of all came John Howland, that “ lusty yonge man ” who on the voyage had been washed overboard and carried fathoms deep beneath the sea, yet by his courage and endurance survived the ordeal, and lived to found one of the chiefest Plymouth families. By the hand he led Elizabeth Tilley, a sweet slip of a girl, with true and loving eyes ever and anon glancing proudly at the stalwart form of the only man she ever loved, and yet never thought to win.

Four noble and comely couple pacing through the grassy street and taking their places under the canopy where Elder Brewster, a magistrate, if not an ordained minister, stood beside a little table whereon was laid the colony’s first Record Book brought by the Anne, and now to be used for the first time, for hitherto the “ scanty an-

nals of the poor" settlement had been kept in Governor Bradford's note-book, now alas lost to posterity.

The simple ceremony was soon over, and as the Separatists denied themselves the privilege of a religious service lest some taint of Papistry might lurk therein, Elder Brewster closed his magisterial office with a prayer in which Isaac and Rebecca were not forgotten, and about which hung a curious flavor of the Church of England service so familiar to the elder's youth.

"Priscilla! Mine at last! My very own," whispered John Alden in his bride's ear as the group broke up and all the world pressed in to offer congratulations.

"There, there, John, if thou hast but just discovered that notable fact I'll leave thee to digest it while I go to see that the dinner is served as it should be."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

“AND TO BE WROTH WITH ONE WE LOVE.”

“BARBARA, hath Master Allerton asked thee to be his wife?” inquired Myles, as he and his cousin sat together upon the bench in front of his own house some few evenings after the weddings.

“He spoke to the governor, and he to me,” replied Barbara, a little spark of mirth glinting in her blue eyes.

“And thou saidst?” —

“I said that I hardly knew Master Allerton by sight as yet, and was in no haste to wed.”

“What sort of yea-nay answer was that, thou silly wench? Why didst not say No, round and full?”

“Because No, wrapped in gentle words, served my turn as well, cousin.”

“Come now, I do remember that tone of old, soft as snow and unbendable as ice. So ’tis the same Barbara I quarreled with so oft, is it? Ever quite sure that her own way is the best, and ever watchful lest any should lay a finger on her free will.”

“Methinks, Myles, you give your kinswoman a somewhat unlovely temper of her own. How is it about Captain Standish in these days? Hath he grown meek and mild, and afraid to carry himself after his own mind?”

“Why so tart, Barbara? Because I chid thee for trifling with Allerton?”

“Nay Myles, I made not yon weary voyage for the sake of quarreling with thee. Well dost thou know, cousin, I would not trifle with any man, and I begged the governor to enforce out of his own mouth the no-say that I worded gently, for truly there is no reason for me to flout the gentleman. How could he honor me more than to ask me to wife?”

“Well, well, so long as thou hast said No and will stick to No, all is well; but I like not this man Allerton; he is too shrewd a trader for a simple gentleman to cope with. He sold me corn and gave scant measure, and I told him of it too. He likes me not better than I like him.”

“Rest easy, Myles, I’ll never make him thy cousin. I care not if I never wed.”

“Nay, that’s too far on t’ other side the hedge. A comely and a winsome lass like thee is sure to wed, but what runs in my head, Barbara, is that there is none left here fit for thee. I would that Bradford had not been so constant to his old-time sweetheart. I would have given thee to him, for though his folk were but yeomen of the better sort there at home, here he is the Governor and playeth his part as well as any Howard or Percy of them all. Winslow cometh of good lineage and carrieth his coat-armor; but he and now his brother John are wed, and Gilbert will leave us anon, so that verily I see no man left with whom a Standish might fitly wed.”

A peal of merry laughter broke in upon the captain’s meditative pause, and his indignant and astonished regard only seemed to aggravate the matter, until at last Barbara breathlessly exclaimed,—

“Nay Myles, for sweet pity’s sake look not so glum,

*Folding his arms he sat regarding her
with an iron visage*





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nor devour me all at one mouthful. Dost remember how I used to tell thee to beware, for 'a little pot is soon hot,' and thine own wrath will choke thee some day?"

"Glad am I to amuse you so pleasantly Mistress Standish, but may I ask the exact provocation to mirth I have just now offered?"

"Oh Myles, I meant not to chafe thy temper so sorely, and I pray thee hold me excused for untimely laughter; but in good sooth it so tickled my fancy to hear thee airing thine old world quips and quiddities about coat-armor, and one with whom a Standish might fitly wed, and yeomen snatched from oblivion by the saving grace of a governor's title! And look upon these rocks and wild woods and swart savages and thine own rude labors — nay then, but I must laugh or burst!"

And giving way to her humor the girl trolled out peal after peal of delicious laughter, while her cousin folding his arms sat regarding her with an iron visage, which whenever she caught sight of it set her off again. At last, however, she wiped her eyes and penitently cried, —

"I did not think myself so rude, Myles. Pr'ythee forgive me, cousin. Nay, look not so ungently upon me! Here's my hand on 't I am sorry."

But the captain took not the offered hand nor unbent his angry brow. Rising from the bench he paced up and down for a moment, then stopping in front of Barbara calmly said, —

"Nay, I'm not angry. At first I was astonished that a gentlewoman could so forget herself; but I do remember that Thomas Standish, your father, married

beneath his station, and so imported a strain into the blood of his noble house that will crop out now and again in his children. I should not therefore too much admire at such derelictions from courtesy and gentleness as I but now have seen."

As he slowly spoke his bitter words the lingering gleams of laughter and the softening lines of penitence faded from Barbara's face. Rising to her height, nearly equal with that of her cousin, she gazed full into his angry eyes with the blue splendor of her own all ablaze with indignation and contempt.

" You dare to make light of my mother, do you, Captain Standish! My dear and dearly honored mother, who in her brave love endured the poverty and the labors that my father had no skill to save her from. My mother, who carried her noble husband upon her shoulders as it were, and would not even die till he was dead. Myles Standish, I take shame to myself that I am kin to you, and if ever I do wed, it shall be to lose my name and forget my lineage."

She passed him going down the hill, but with a long step he overtook her, saying almost timidly, —

" Nay, nay, thou 'rt over sharp with me, Barbara! I said, and I meant, no word against thy mother, of whom I ever heard report as one of the sweetest and faith-fullest of wives" —

" There, that will do, sir. My mother needs no praise of yours, and, thanks be to God, hath gone where she may rest from the burden of her high marriage. Let me pass an 't please you, Master Captain."

" But Barbara, nay Barbara, stay but to hear a word" —

" There have been words enow and to spare. I go

now to tell the governor that I am minded to take passage in the Anne once more. My mother's folk in Bedfordshire, yeomen all of them, Captain Standish, will make me gay and welcome, and with them and such as them will I live and die."

"And fill thy leisure with fashioning silk purses out of fabric thou 'lt find to hand," cried the captain, his temper flashing up again; but Barbara neither turned nor replied as she fled down the hill to hide the tears she could no longer restrain.

Howbeit she said no word to Bradford of the return passage, a fact which Standish easily discovered when early next morning he met the governor and stopped to say to him, —

"Well met, Will; I was on my road to seek thee, man."

"Ay, and for what, brother?"

"Why, Will, I'm moped with naught to do, and all these strange faces at every turn. I liked it better when we were to ourselves and it was only to fight the Neponsets now and again. I fain would find some work further agate than yon palisado."

"Why, then, thy wish and my desire fit together as cup and ball, for here is the Little James unladen and idle. She is to stay with us, thou knowest, for use in trading and fishing, but Bridges, her master, saith some of his men are grumbling already at prospect of such peaceful emprises. They fain would go buccaneering in the Spanish Seas, or discover some such road to hasty fortune, albeit bloody and violent. Master Bridges and I agreed that it was best to find work for these uneasy souls withouten too much delay, and I told him we had been thinking to send a party to look after the fishing-

stage we built last year at Cape Ann. Gloucester, they say Roger Conant hath named the place already. Now what say you, Myles? Will take some men and join them to Bridges' buccaneers, and hold all in hand and start them on fishing?"

"'T will suit me woundy well, governor. Howbeit, 't is not the time for cod, is it?"

"No, but mackerel and bluefish are in season, and at all odds 't is well to be on hand to claim the staging, for Conant hath sent word by an Indian that some English ships were harrying our fishermen at Monhegan, and we had best look to our properties in those regions."

"Ay, ay, 't is as thou sayest, Will, like cup and ball, thy need and my desire. How soon can we sail?"

"Why, to-night, an' it pleaseth thee. Bridges is in haste to get off, and the sooner the Little James is afloat the more content he will find himself. And as to thy company. Here is a minute of the men I had thought on."

"H—m, h—m," muttered the captain glancing over the list handed him by Bradford. "Yes, these are sound good fellows all, and none of them burthened with wives. And by that same token, Will, thou and thy dame will care for my kinswoman, and bar Master Allerton from persecuting her with his most mawkish suit while I am gone?"

"Surely, Myles, we 'll care for Mistress Barbara, who is to my wife as one of her own sisters."

"Yes, the Carpenters are gentlefolk, if not a county family like ours," said Standish simply. Bradford stared a little, but only replied, —

"Then I put the command in your hands, Captain, and you will order matters as suits your own con-

venience and pleasure. Master Bridges will welcome you right gladly."

And before the sun, just risen over Manomet, sank behind Captain's Hill, the Little James had rounded the Gurnet, and was standing on for Cape Ann, with Myles Standish leaning against her mainmast, and smoking the pipe Hobomok had bestowed upon him with the assurance that he who used it carried a charmed life so long as it remained unbroken. The captain's arms were folded and his eyes fixed upon the fort-crowned hill where lay his home, but it was not of fort or home that he mused as at the last he muttered, —

“ And yet I glory in thy spirit, thou proud peat ! ”

Early the next morning Standish was somewhat roughly roused from his slumbers by Master Bridges, who, shaking his shoulder, cried, —

“ Here, Captain, here 's gear for thee. Rouse thee, Master ! ”

“ What is 't, Bridges ? What 's to do, man ? Are the savages upon us ? ”

“ Nay, but pirates, or as good.”

“ Ha ! That 's well. Send all your small arms on deck, Master Bridges, pipe to quarters, train your falcon — I 'll be on deck anon ” —

“ Nay, but you do somewhat mistake, Captain. I said indeed pirates, but that 's not sure. There is a little ship anchored within a cable 's length of the James, and her men are busy on shore with the fishing-stage which Lister saith is yours ” —

“ And so it is, every sliver of it.”

“ Mayhap, then, you 'll come on deck and tell these merry men as much, for they do only jeer at me.”

“ They 'll not jeer long when my snaphance joins in

the debate," said Standish grimly as he followed the master up the companion way.

"Hail me yon craft, and ask for her commandant," ordered he, glancing rapidly over the scene. Bridges obeyed, and got reply that Master Hewes, captain of the Fisherman out of Southampton, was on shore with all his men except the ship-keeper, who, however, spared the jibes with which he had seasoned his reply to Bridges' first informal hail.

"The wind is fair, the tide flood. Carry your craft further in-shore, Master Bridges, that we may parley with these pirates from the vantage ground of our own deck," ordered the captain, and was obeyed so fairly that the Little James presently lay hove-to within a biscuit-toss of the staging, where some fifteen or twenty men were diligently employed in curing a take of fish.

A short sharp colloquy ensued, Standish claiming the erection and its precincts as the property of Plymouth, and ordering the interlopers to at once release it, and to carry away their fish and their utensils, leaving room for the lawful owners' occupancy.

To this demand Hewes impudently replied that when he had done with the fish-flakes he cared not who used them, and that he would abandon the place when it suited his own convenience, and not before.

"Well and good; then we shall come and take it," shouted the captain in conclusion, and turning his attention in-board, he rapidly divided his men and Bridges' into two storming parties, while a watch left on board was to take charge of the light falcon mounted on deck, and at a signal from shore to begin the dance by firing upon the staging which Hewes was already barricading with a row of barrels, behind which he rapidly posted his men, musket in hand, and matches alight.

"Now by St. Lawrence!" cried Standish, watching these preparations. "But the fellow hath a pretty notion of a barricado! I could not have done so very much better in his place. 'T is fairer fortune than we could look for, to meet so ready a fellow, and you shall see some pretty sport anon, Master Bridges."

But at this moment a little group of men hastening from the fishing huts marking the present site of Gloucester, appeared upon the scene, and in their leader both Standish and Bridges recognized Roger Conant, a friend and sometime visitor of Plymouth, who immediately upon arrival of the Anne had gone to join some friends fishing at Monhegan, and now, with them, was establishing a sister station at Gloucester. Warned by the Indians that Hewes had seized the Plymouth fishing-stage, and seeing the Little James entering the bay, Conant hastened to collect his friends and present himself upon the scene of action to act as mediator, or ally of Plymouth, as circumstances might direct.

"We have come none too soon, men!" exclaimed Conant breathlessly as at a run he rounded the headland closing in the cove, and saw upon the barricaded staging Hewes and his men blowing at their matches, while Standish, his eyes aflame and an angry smile upon his lips, sprang ashore and hurried his men out of the boat.

"Now glad am I to see you, Master Conant," cried Bridges, already waiting upon the beach, and hastening toward him he said in a lower voice. "Our captain hath got on his fighting cap, and thrown discretion to the winds. 'T will be an ill day for Plymouth if her men are led on to kill Englishmen fishing with the king's license."

“ Ay indeed will it. Bide a bit till I can parley with both thy captain and Hewes, who is not an ill fellow if one handleth him gingerly.”

“ Gingerly goeth not smoothly with peppery, and ‘t is but half the truth to call our captain that,” said Bridges with a dry smile, as Conant passed him to reach Standish who was marshaling his men upon the sands.

Too long it were to detail the arguments of the man of peace, the delicate manipulation of the tempers of both parties, the concessions wrung from the one side and the other, until after several hours’ debate Standish moodily said,—

“ Well Conant, sith you put it so, sith you make it out that by enforcing the colony’s right I do but attack the colony’s life, I yield, for I am sworn defender and champion of Plymouth and her prosperity, and never shall it be said that Myles Standish preferred his own quarrel to the well-being of those he had sworn to protect. To leave yon fellow unscathed for his insolence, sits like a blister on a raw wound, but go and make what terms you can with him. I suppose you require not that I abandon the colony’s property altogether to him.”

“ Nay, nay, Captain, but I am thinking that my comrades and I, with some of the Little James’ men and Master Hewes’ company, should clap to and run up another staging in a few hours either for the new-comers or the Plymouth men”—

“ For Plymouth if you would pleasure me. I would not my men should take the leavings of yon rabble at any price,” interrupted Standish haughtily.

“ So be it, and if Hewes with his men will do their best, and Master Bridges and you will send your crew to help, we also will labor in the common cause until

each party shall have a staging of its own, and the bond of Christian charity need not be broken."

"That same bond will be all the safer if I may get away from here with as small delay as may be," retorted Standish.

"And that too shall be," replied Conant cheerfully. "For I fain would speak with the Master of the *Anne* before she sails, and I'll e'en take our own pinnace and set you across the bay, and be back again before my mates have well missed me."

"So wilt thou save me from some such explosion as befalls when a little pot is tightly closed and its contents overheated," replied Myles with a grim smile, and although Conant stared at the odd simile, he paused not to ask its solution, but so hastened the building of the stage and the other business of the day that when sunset fell, the two men, leaving the rest at an amicable supper eaten in common, spread the wide sails of their pinnace to a fitful western wind, and skimmed southward under the soothing and chastening light of the newly risen moon.

The western wind though often sighing in capricious languor never quite deserted those who trusted to it, and at a good hour next morning the pinnace dropped her anchor beside the *Anne*, and her dory carried the two men ashore just as Plymouth woke to a new day.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BARBARA.

“WILT give me some breakfast, Priscilla?” asked a well-known voice, as Mistress Alden bent to uncover her bake kettle, or Dutch oven, to see if the manchets of fine flour her husband liked so heartily were well browned.

“Lord-a-mercy!” cried she nearly dropping the cover and springing to her feet. “What, ’t is truly thee, Captain, and not thy spook? Why ’t was but yester e’en Dame Bradford told me thou wert away with Master Bridges on a fishing adventure, and none might guess the day of thy return.”

“She said so, did she?” replied the captain; “and who heard it beside thee, Priscilla?”

“Why — now let me think — yea and verily, Christian Penn was in the room and no doubt heard the sad tidings though she said naught.”

“And none beside, Mistress Alden?”

“None — nay, now I think on ’t, thy kinswoman Barbara was in presence. But there, my manchets will be burnt to crusts. Sit thee down, Captain, sit thee down.”

“And what said Mistress Standish anent my going?” asked Myles seating himself upon a three-legged stool and doffing his slouched hat.

Priscilla looked at him with one of the keen glances which John declared counted the cockles of a man’s

heart. Then she smiled with an air of satisfaction and replied, —

“ Barbara said naught, and so told me much.”

“ Told thee much? Come now, Priscilla, spare me thine old-time jibes and puzzlements and show thyself true womanly, and mine own honest friend. I’m sore bestead, Priscilla — I have a quarrel with Myles Stan-dish, and ’t is as big a fardel as my shoulders will bear. Tell me what Barbara’s silence meant to thee? ”

“ It meant that it was her doings that thou hadst gone, and that thy going both angered and grieved her, Captain.”

“ Angered, mayhap.”

“ Yea, and grieved. She ate no supper, although I prayed her to taste a new confection of mine own in-vention.”

“ Priscilla, dost think Master Allerton would be — would make a ” —

“ Would be the right goodman for Barbara? No, and no again, I think naught of the kind.”

“ Ah! You women are so quick upon the trigger, Priscilla. I would my snaphance went to the aim as lightly and as surely as your or Barbara’s thought.”

“ Come now, Captain, the manchets are done, and the fish is broiled, and the porridge made. Wait but till I call the goodman and open a pottle of my summer beer; ’t is dear Dame Brewster’s diet-drink, with a thought more flavor to it, and John says — ah, here thou art, thou big sluggard. We need no horn to call thee to thy meat.”

Entering the cottage with a grin upon his lips and the promise of a kiss in his eyes, Alden started joyfully at sight of the Captain, and at Priscilla’s impatient

summons he bashfully took the head of the table and asked the blessing upon his family and their daily bread, which was then the undisputed duty of every head of a household. The captain ate well, as Priscilla slyly noted; and as she rose from the table and began rapidly to carry the few pewter and wooden dishes to the scullery John had added to the two rooms and loft comprising the cottage, she muttered,—

“What fools we women be! When they care for us the most, a savory dish will comfort them, and we must pule, and pine, and pale — ah !”

For the captain had followed and stood at the housewife’s elbow with a confused and somewhat foolish smile upon his face.

“Wilt do me a favour, Priscilla ?”

“Gladly, as thou knowest, sir.”

“Nay, sir me no sirs, Priscilla! Take me for thine own familiar friend as already I am Alden’s.”

“T is an ill-advised quotation, Captain, for the ‘own familiar friend’ of the Psalmist proved a false one. But ne’ertheless I ’ll wear the cap, and haply prove as true as another to my promise. What can I do for thee, Captain ?”

“Why — as thou dost seem to surmise, Priscilla, there is a question between Barbara and me — truth to tell I gave her just matter of offense, and now I ’ve thought better on ’t and fain would tell her so, and yet I fear me if I ask outright she ’ll not let me come to speech of her.”

“Ay, ay, good friend, I see,” exclaimed Priscilla, holding up her slender shapely hand. “And here’s the cat’s-paw that’s to pull thy chestnuts from the fire !”

“Nay Priscilla” —

“ Yea Captain ! Put not thy wit to further distress, good friend, for it needs not ; I see all and more than all thou couldst tell me. Go thy way to the Fort, and look over thy dear guns and wait until thou seest — what thou wilt see.”

And with a little push the young matron thrust her guest out of the open door of the scullery, and hastened to finish her own labors.

Almost an hour passed and the Captain of the Armies of New England had uncovered and examined and sighted and petted each gun in his armament more than once ; had considered the range of the saker, the minion, the falcon, and the bases ; and had stood gazing blankly at the whitened skull of Wituwamat above the gate of the Fort until the wrens who nested there began to fly restlessly in and out, fancying that the captain planned an invasion of their territory. He still stood in this posture when the rustle of a footfall among the dried herbage reached his quick ear, and turning he confronted Barbara, whose down-dropt eyes hid the gleam of amusement the sight of his melancholy attitude had kindled in their depths.

“ Priscilla says that you have returned home from the fishing because you were but poorly, cousin, and she would have me come and ask if you cared to speak with the chirurgeon who is going afield presently.”

“ So chill, so frozen, Barbara ? Is 't so a kinswoman should speak with one ill at ease both in mind and body ? ”

“ I came but as a messenger, sir, and venture not to presume upon any claim of kindred to one who joins the blood of Percivale to that of Standish.”

“ Nay now, nay now, Barbara ! —Here, come to the

shaded side of the Fort, and sit you down where we two sat" —

"We two sat on the bench without your door the last parley that we had, good cousin."

"Gentle tongues aye give the sharpest wounds," and it is thou who provest the proverb true, Barbara."

"Nay, I 'll sit me down and listen with all meekness to what thou hast to say, Captain Standish."

"Thanks for even so much courtesy, Barbara, for I have sought thee to say that I deserve none at thy hands. I, to whose protection and comforting thou hast come across the sea, have treated thee as no base-born churl hath warrant for treating the meanest of woman-kind. I, to pride myself upon gentle blood and knightly training, and then throw insult and taunt upon a woman's unshielded head! Nay, Barbara, had any man three days agone forecast my doing such a thing, I had hurled the lie in his teeth, and haply crammed it down with Gideon's hilt. Nay — the good sword may well be ashamed of his master; well may I look for him to shiver in my grasp when next I draw him" —

"Myles! Myles, I 'll hear no more! Nay then, not a word, or I shall hold it proven that my wish is naught to thee, for all thy contrite sayings. I fear me Priscilla is right, and thou 'rt truly ill. This hot sun hath touched thy head with some such distemper as sped poor Master Carver. Sit thee down here beside me, and I 'll fetch cool water from the spring to bathe thy temples."

"It needs not, cousin. My distemper is of the mind, the heart; nay, it is wounded honor, lass, and there 's no ill of body can sting a man so shrewdly as that. Say that I have thy pardon, Barbara, if thou canst say it in

truth, and 't will be better than any med'cine in Fuller's chest."

" Why, certes, Myles, thou hast my forgiveness and over and over for any rough word thou mayst have said, and in sober sadness I mind not what they were, for all my thought hath been of my unkindness to thee. Myles, I never told thee, but when thy mother lay a-dying, and thou far away, fighting the Spaniards in Holland, she bade me care for thee even as she would have done, and fill a sister's place—and more, and I laid my hand in hers and promised sacredly, and so she rested content."

" And why didst never tell me this before, cousin?"

" I know not—nay, but that's not all out true, and I'll tell thee no lies, Myles. When next thou camest to our poor home at Man, thou didst see Rose, and from the first I knew well enow that there'd be no need of sister-care for one who found so sweet a wife."

" Ay, she was sweet,—sweet as her pretty name. Dost know, Barbara, when these bushes burgeon in early summer with their soft and fragrant bloom it ever minds me of that sweet and fragile Rose that lies beneath."

But Barbara was silent.

" Ah well, ah well, 't is a brief chapter strangely at odds with the rude life wherein it found itself, and now 't is closed, and better so for her. She could not have bloomed among these dreary sands and savage woods; it was not fitting."

He paced a few steps back and forward, and Barbara rose, her clear eyes full of a woman's noble and patient strength.

" And so, Myles, we are at peace again, and I at least will make it my endeavor that there shall be no such breach of charity in the future."

“Nay, Barbara, stay a little, I pray thee. I have somewhat to say, for which in advance I must ask thy patience and indulgence. Thou’lt not be angered at me so soon again, Barbara?”

“Nay, I’ll not be angered, cousin.” But Barbara’s voice was very sad.

“Tis this, and I thought of it all last night as we flitted in the moonlight across the bay, and what thou sayest of my mother’s charge to thee fits my thought like hand and glove. Why should not we two wed, Barbara?”

He turned and looked at her, and stood amazed to see how the steadfast calm of her face broke up in a tempest of indignation, of grief, of outraged womanhood.

“Why, Barbara! Why, cousin! What is it, what have I said? What ails thee, dear? What works upon thee so cruelly?”

“That any man should dare fancy it of me — there, there, let be, let me pass, let me go!”

“Nay, then, I’ll not let thee go. I’m but a rude bungler in these women-ways, and I’ve said or done somewhat that wounds thee sorely, and I’ll not let thee go till ’t is all outsaid and I have once more cleared myself of at least willful offense toward thee.”

“Wilt keep me by force, sir?”

“Ay maid I will, for ’t is only in bodily strength that I’m thy match, and so for the moment I will e’en use it. Sit thee here now and listen yet again, as I say, Why may not we two wed, cousin Barbara? Thou’rt not mine own cousin, thou knowest, child; ’twas thy father and mine were in that bond; and — now bear with me, Barbara — I’ve a shrewd suspicion that my mother bade thee be not a sister but a wife to me. Truth now, did she not, maid?”

“She could not guide either my love or thine, so why would she try ?”

“Nay, that’s no answer, lass, but we’ll let the question go. There’s not a woman alive, Barbara, so dear to me as thou ; there’s none I hold in greater reverence or trust ; there’s none with whom I would so gladly live out my days, and — though now I risk thy scorn, — there’s none whose lineage I so respect” —

“What, the Henley lineage ?” murmured Barbara, with face averted to hide a smile.

“Nay, thou’rt all Standish, Barbara ! Thou’rt more Standish than I, for thou hast the eyes of those old portraits my poor father vainly tried to wrest from his cousin Alexander. Let me look at those eyes, Barbara !”

“And so because it suits thy convenience to make me thy wife, thou takst no heed of mine own fancies,” said Barbara, not heeding this request. “And I pray thee unhand me, for I promise to patiently abide till thou hast said thy say.”

“Now there again thou dost me wrong, lass, for as I told thee t’ other day there’s no bachelor here fit to wed with thee, there’s none I’d give thee to, nor would I see thee wither away unwed.”

“Gramercy cousin, but methinks that is a question I well might settle for myself.”

“Why nay, sith there is no gentleman unwed among our company, save Allerton, whom I love as little as thou dost.”

“I care not for any”—

“I know it, Barbara, I know it well. Thou’rt that rare marvel, a woman sufficing unto herself, for as I

believe, thou hast never fancied any man, though more than one hath fancied thee."

"'Tis my cold heart," murmured Barbara with a little smile strangled in its birth.

"Nay," replied her cousin thoughtfully as he pulled at his moustache and gazed upon the ground at his feet. "Nay, I call thee not so much heartless as fancy-free. Thou 'rt kind and gentle, ay, and loving as my dear mother knew. I'm well content with thy heart for such as it is, Barbara, if thou 'lt but give it me."

"Nay, Myles, I'm deadly sure I've none to give, and out of nothing nothing comes."

"Thou ne'er canst love me, Barbara?"

"No more than I love thee now, Myles."

"With calm cousin-love thou meanest?"

"I am ill skilled at logic, Myles. I cannot set out my feelings in class and order, as our chirurgeon doth his herbs and flowers."

"Well, Barbara, I'm grieved that thou lookest upon me so coldly, but I draw not back from my petition. I'd liefer have thy calm tenderness than another's hot love, for I can trust thee as I trust mine own honor, and I know full well that thou 'lt ever be better than thy word. So take me, Barbara, for thy husband, and fulfill the dear mother's last desire, and give me the hope of teaching thee in the days to come to love me even as I love thee."

But for all answer Barbara only turned and laid her hands in his, and slowly raised the wonder of her eyes until they looked straight into his; and the man whose front had never quailed in face of death or danger grew pallid beneath his bronze, and trembled like a leaf in the wind.

“What! — Barbara! — Dost really love me, maid? Nay, cheat me not — speak! Dost love me, sweetheart, already?”

But Barbara said never a word, nor did Myles ever know more of the secret of her life than in that one supreme moment he read in her steadfast eyes.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A MILITARY WEDDING.

“AND thou ’rt not amazed, Elsie, that our captain and his kinswoman will wed ? ” asked Governor Bradford of his wife in the privacy of the family bedroom.

“No more than at the sun’s rising in the East,” replied Alice with a demure little smile.

“Hm ! Master Galileo saith the sun riseth not at all, and though the power of Rome caused him to gainsay it, he did tell me privily in Amsterdam that it was sooth, and the sun bided forever in the one place while this round world turned over daily.”

“I ever thought the good man was a little crazed,” replied Mistress Bradford serenely. “Like Paul, much learning had made him mad.”

“Nay wife, ’t was Festus charged Paul with madness, because the apostle knew more than himself. Haply ’t is so with Master Galileo.”

“It may be, William. These be not matters for women to meddle withal,” replied Alice meekly.

“But anent our captain’s wooing of his cousin, Elsie ? How is ’t thou ’rt not amazed like the rest of us ? ”

“Because I saw long since that Barbara would never wed another than her cousin, and thou knowest, Will, how like draws to like, even across the waste of ocean.”

"Ay dame, I know it well and sweetly, and never shall I forget to give thanks to Him whose wisdom reacheth from end to end, sweetly ordering all things. But how chanced Mistress Barbara to confess her fondness to thee, sweetheart?"

"Nay now! Though men do be our masters in most things, how dull they still show themselves in others. As if a maid, or for that matter a widow, would ever 'confess her fondness' for any man till he had wooed her so to do, and but coyly then, if she be wise."

"Too coyly for him to credit her with overmuch tenderness," suggested the bridegroom.

"Facts speak louder than words, and if a woman will set herself upon far and perilous journeys, and compass sea and land to come to him who calleth her, methinks he need not doubt her friendship for him. Nay now, nay now, we talk of Barbara and the Captain, and I'll tell thee. Since I was left alone in London,—so lonely too in my wide house in Duke's Place,—I have taken dear and sweet counsel with Barbara, whom I first knew in the congregation of Pastor Jacob, and she hath been my guest for weeks and months at a time, so that if any two women know each other well, their names are Barbara and Alice."

"But yet she never told thee that she loved her cousin? Now that is passing strange."

"T would to my mind have been far stranger had she so bewrayed herself."

"But still those gentle eyes of thine read the secret of her heart?"

"I did mistrust it for long, but when I had thy letter, Will, and settled my mind to come to thee, I told Barbara somewhat of the old story"—

“Of how thou wast minded to spite thy comely face by cutting off its nose?”

But Mistress Bradford had no smile for her husband’s somewhat coarse jest, and went quietly on,—

“And I told her, too, that her kinsman, Myles, had lost the sweet wife of whom she had so often and so gently spoken; and at the last I told her I was minded to sell all that I had and go to our folk in New England, and I asked her would she go, to be ever and always my dear sister if no other home should offer, and though we said no word that day of Captain Standish, sure am I that he was in both our minds. And now, dear man, dost see through the millstone?”

“Ay, since woman’s wit hath delved a hole, I can see through it as well as another.” And the governor kissed his wife as merrily as another man, while she adjusting the demure matron’s cap about her fair young face went out to see that the breakfast was fairly spread.

A fortnight later when the Anne had sailed, and the Little James had returned and gone again upon a luckless fishing trip, and the new-comers had settled into their appointed places, and the town was once more quiet, there came a fair September day when work was laid aside, and after breakfast the armies of the colony, at least a hundred souls in all,—if we count the trumpeters, the buglers, the fifers, and the drummers,—assembled on the Training Green just across the brook, and after some evolutions marched in orderly array back again past the spring and up the hill to the governor’s house, where they were joined by him and the elder. Then up and on to the captain’s house, where a guard of honor presented itself at the door, and ushered forth

the chief, carefully dressed in his uniform of state, while at his side merrily clanked Gideon, resplendent, though none but he and his master knew it, in such a furbishing and polishing as seldom had fallen to his lot before.

Saluting his comrades gravely and with somewhat more of dignity than his wont, the captain took his place, and the procession climbed the short ascent remaining to the door of the Fort, where entered the dignitaries and as many more as could find room. Here in the great room now used as a place of worship a group of matrons and maids awaited them, with Barbara in their midst, fair and stately in her white robes, the glory of her eyes outvying any jewels she could have worn.

The meagre civil service was spoken by the governor, but at the request of both bride and bridegroom the elder made a prayer to which the captain listened more reverently than his wont, and cried Amen more heartily.

Then they came forth these two Standishes made one, and the train band escorted them to their home, and fired a salute of honor, whose reverberating waves rolling across the waters broke at last upon the foot of Captain's Hill, sighing away into silence over the quiet plain where one day should be dug a warrior's grave, marked head and foot with a great three-cornered stone.

CHAPTER XL.

“PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW.”

AND so, tenderly, reluctantly, lingeringly we leave them, these dear ones whose memory we cherish so lovingly, and in the sober reality of whose lives lies a charm no romance can ever reach.

Would you know more of them, for there are, as the Sultana promised morning by morning, stranger and better things to come than these that have been told, go read the annals of the Pilgrims, those precious fragments left to us by Bradford and by Winslow, and a letter written by De Rasières, Secretary of the Dutch Colony at Manhattan, who, visiting Plymouth upon a diplomatic errand in 1627, wrote to his superiors a letter preserved in the Royal Library of Holland wherein he draws this little picture of the town we have tried to reproduce, and mentions some of these dear friends whose lives we know so much better than he did.

“New Plymouth lies on the slope of a hill, stretching east toward the sea-coast with a broad street about a cannon shot long, leading down the hill with a cross street in the middle going southward to the rivulet, and northward to the land. The houses are constructed of hewn planks, with gardens also enclosed behind, and at the sides, with hewn planks, so that their houses and court-yards are arranged in very good order, with a

stockade against a sudden attack ; and at the ends of the streets there are three wooden gates. In the centre on the cross street stands the Governor's house, before which is a square erection upon which four patereros are mounted so as to flank along the streets.

“Upon the hill they have a large square house, with a flat roof made of thick sawn planks stayed with oak beams, upon the top of which they have six cannons which shoot iron balls of four or five pounds and command the surrounding country. The lower part they use for their church, where they preach on Sundays and the usual holidays. They assemble by beat of drum, each with his musket or firelock, in front of the Captain's door; they have their cloaks on, and place themselves in order three abreast, and are led by a sergeant without beat of drum. Behind comes the Governor in a long robe; beside him on the right hand comes the preacher with his cloak on, and on the left hand the Captain with his side-arms and cloak on, and with a small cane in his hand; and so they march in good order, and each sets his arms down near him. Thus they are constantly on their guard night and day.”

But after all, glad as we are of this little loophole pierced through the mists of antiquity, the fashion of our friends' houses and court-yards, their cloaks and muskets and quaint Sunday procession are not as valuable to us as the story of their individual lives: the story of Priscilla and John Alden and their children; of Myles, military power of the colony, beyond his three-score years and ten; of Barbara, called his “dear wife” in the dignified Last Will, wherein he bequeaths “Ormistic, Bousconge, Wrightington, Maudesley” and the rest, to Alexander his “son and heir,” sturdily proclaiming

with as it were his last breath, that these fair domains were "surreptitiously detained" from him. And Lora Standish, fair sweet shadow upon the mirror of the past; and Mary Dingley, beloved of the grand old warrior; and Alice Bradford, of whom at the last Morton wrote, —

"Adoe my loving freind, my aunt, my mother,
Of those that's left I have not such another."

And Bradford himself, and Brewster, and Winslow, and Howland, each one of whom hath left behind him enough of achievement to fill a dozen of the degenerate lives of a butterfly of to-day; and the women they loved, and the young men and maidens who rose up around them: ah, how can we leave them, how can we say good-by! Shall we not the rather cherish them and study them more than we ever yet have done, feeling in our hearts that those virtues, that courage, and that nobility of life may be ours as well as theirs, may illustrate the easy life of to-day, and make it less unworthy to be the fruit of the Tree of Liberty, planted in the blood and watered by the tears of our Fathers.



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